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*Archives of*

# P

*Recorded Sound*

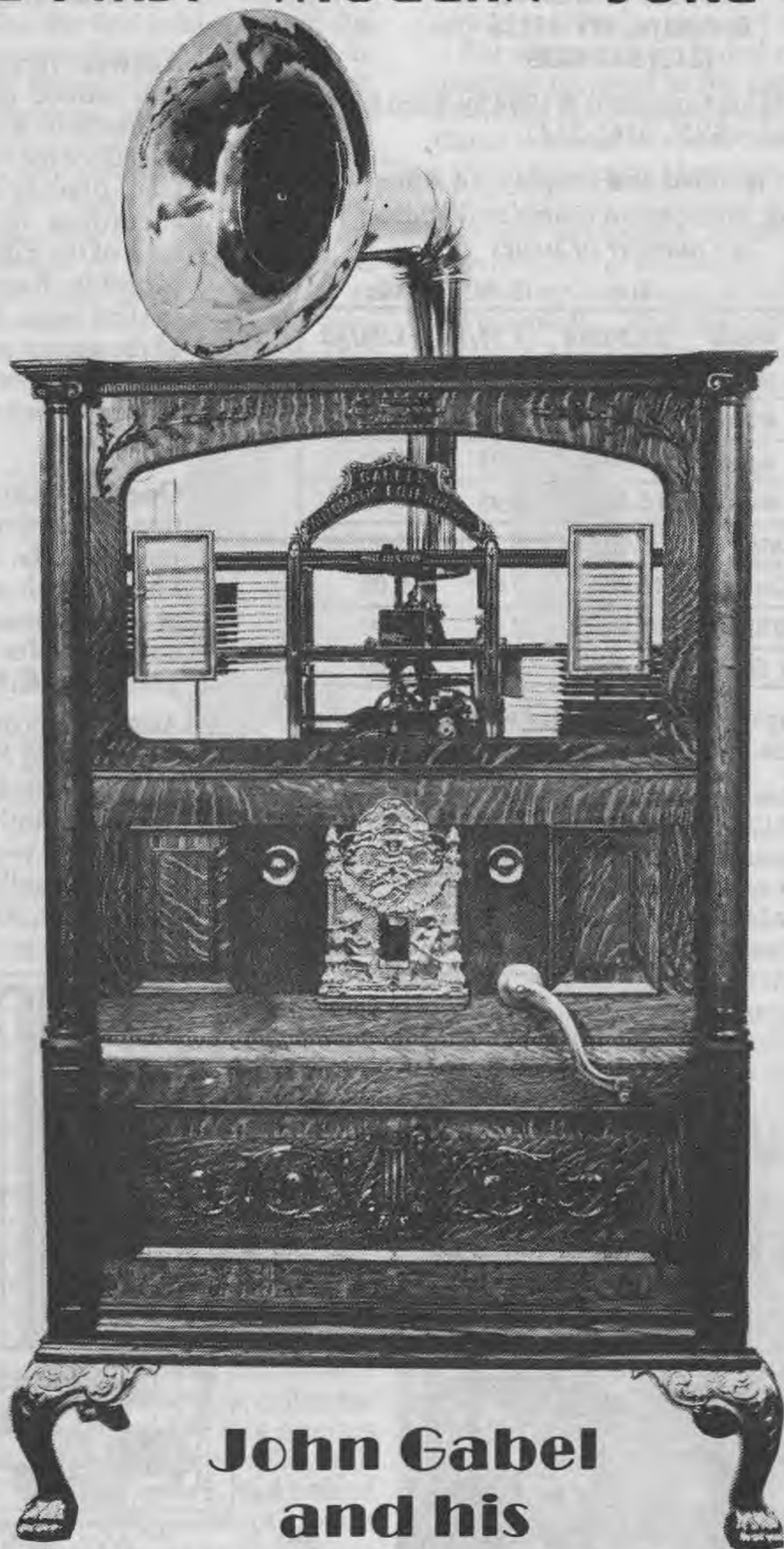
# M

Vol VII

THE ANTIQUE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY®

No 8

## The First "Modern" Juke Box



### John Gabel and his Automatic Entertainer

Rick Crandall

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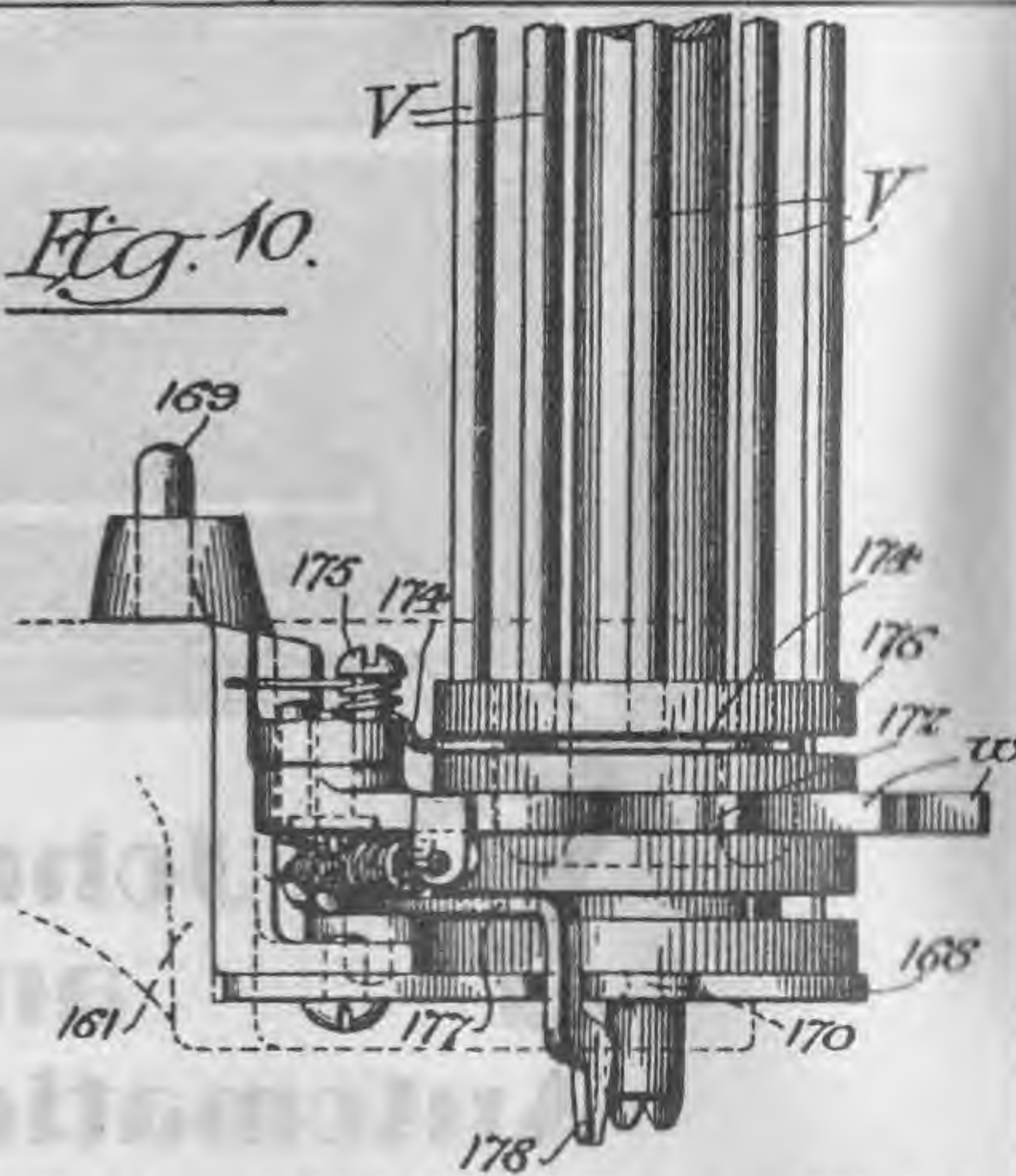
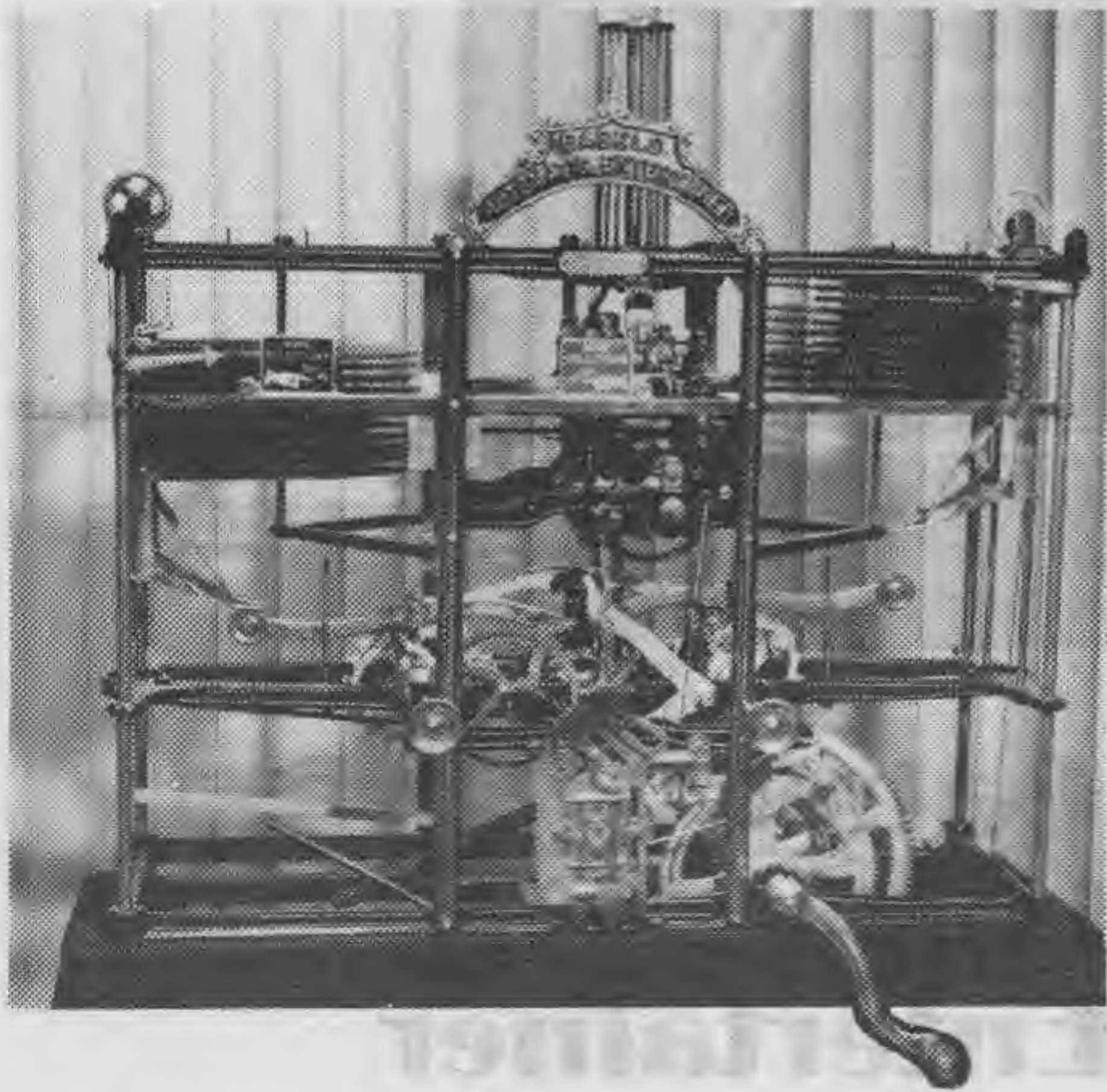
**DEAR APM:**

**Question:** I noticed that on p. xlii of *Edison Cylinder Records, 1889-1912*, you list only James L. Stamper as a member of Polk Miller's Old South Quartet. Were you ever able to identify other members of this interesting group? A.Y., Raleigh, NC

**Answer:** James L. Stamper was indeed the basso of this quartet which had quite a career outside of the recording studios. Geo. Blacker informs us that, according to the Jan. 1910 issue of the *Edison Phonograph Monthly*, Randall Graves was the first tenor. Although a photo of the group appears there, no other members are identified, and the other two names remain a mystery!

**Question:** I know that instructional dictation cylinders were made for the Edison Business Phonograph and Voicewriter at 150 grooves per inch. Were any made for regular phonographs? G.P., San Jose, CA

**Answer:** According to the June, 1910 issue of *EPM* (Vol. VIII), p. 6, a special set of 25 2-minute cylinders (100 grooves per inch), were prepared by J. N. Kimball, a stenographic expert, for 50¢ apiece. None are known to exist:



The mechanism of #711 from the front, in restored condition, ready to slide into the case. Note the central coin-slot with magnet slug detector and glass window for keeping the last three coins in view.

# A History of the First Coin-operated Multi-Disc Phonograph

Rick Crandall

John Gabel was an early inventor associated with the phonograph, but he has been lurking in the shadows of insufficient information. It is known that the first coin-operated cylinder phonograph appeared in 1889 (see APM, Vol. III, no. 1), and that the first coin-operated disc phonograph was introduced in 1898. But for those in search of the selective, coin-operated, multi-disc player, some collectors have more than suspected that Gabel's contributions, particularly in the area of automatic phonographs, were important, early, and too little appreciated.

Indeed, a study of the U.S. patent files turns up #1,134,603 *granted* on April 16, 1915 for an automatic acoustic disc phonograph with an ingenious device that even changes the steel needle after each record is played! True, 1915 is over ten years earlier than the first real jukeboxes (AMI, Mills, Seeburg, etc., from the 1927-1929 era), but look again! The patent was actually *filed* in February of 1906. Now that is early!

One look at the patent drawings depicts a beautiful machine that would catch anyone's eye (see p. 4). A fancy wood case with inset bevelled oak panels, ornate castings rivaling the art cases of the early gambling machines, bevelled glass windows on all sides and a large brass horn on top. That would certainly satisfy the beauty criteria for most collectors, but the machine doesn't stop there.

A further look into the mechanism drawings and a read through the dry language of the patent shows great mechanical ingenuity. Two stacks of twelve individually selectable 10" disc records, a coin mechanism with an early magnetic slug detector, an advanced tone arm design, weight and size compensators to adjust for the lack of record standards, and more. Everything including the record changer, needle changer, tune indicator, play counter and turntable was powered automatically by one full turn of a gambling machine-like crank.

Some of us have known existing examples of a later version of the Gabel machine, called the Gabel Automatic Entertainer. It is in a somewhat plainer case, but still quite attractive, with tone quality that is indeed superb, and best of all, the mechanism is nearly identical to the patent drawings. This machine usually carries a patent plate with dates like 1909 and 1916 on it and so collectors have not known where to classify this machine. It was too early for the

jukebox era, but too late to be an important development in the phonograph era. This later design incorporated an enclosed horn. It is sought after and known extant examples number less than two dozen as of the writing of this article, making it a rare and desirable machine.

But who was John Gabel and what about the machine pictured in the patent filed in 1906? There is a brief but provocative mention of the Gabel machine in *From Tin Foil to Stereo*:

"The Automatic Machine and Tool Company of Chicago manufactured the first truly selective disc mechanism. Although spring motor-operated, it was automatic, permitting a choice of 24 selections stored in racks at either side of the turntable.... As in the earlier cylinder mechanisms, Gabel's device had a screw feed mechanism to carry the sound box

across the record; it was also equipped with a magnetic slug detector. The entire operation by the patron was confined to one handle at the front of the cabinet that changed the record, the needle, and wound the motor all in one turn. In the industry, the John Gabel Automatic Entertainer is recognized as the true progenitor of the modern juke box, yet this was only 1906!"

The progenitor. So why has there not been more coverage of John Gabel and his wondrous machine? A thorough check around the collector community yielded a

possible answer. No examples of the 1906 machine were known to exist and no advertising or other literature had yet surfaced to describe the man, the machine or the company.

So who was John Gabel and would we ever see his early machine? Was it ever commercial?

In 1981 the first break-through occurred. A gambling machine dealer in Chicago was given a lead to check out a "horn phonograph in a slot machine case" located in a factory building south of Chicago. In rapid succession, the machine (serial #711) flew through the hands of a picker, a slot dealer and a collector with breathtaking price appreciation along the way. Finally, there it stood in all its unrestored, non-working but complete glory in the author's spare bedroom.

Piece by piece the machine was nervously dismantled. Each sub-assembly and then each screw, gear and spring was photographed. The dismantling procedure was carefully recorded. This machine was a one of a kind for the



JOHN GABEL

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 26, 1906.

9 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

The patent drawing that triggered the search. The vertical cage (#156) is the set of storage tubes for the 300 steel needles, #63 is the coin-drop, #89 (twice) indicates the tune card holders and #23 is the feedscrew-fed tonearm.

John Gabel,  
Esq.:- Peirce & Fisher  
Attys

moment and this author was not going to be the one to have taken it apart beyond reassembly. A year and several stripped gear restorations, cleaning, buffing, plating, etc., later, it was ready for final regulation. Chuck Pfeiffer, who had much experience restoring phonographs and who had restored the Gabel reproducer, came for the weekend to assist.

The result is as pictured on the cover. A magnificent appearance, flawless repetitive operation (as of this writing the Entertainer has played upwards of 300 records without a single jam) and in Chuck's own words: "The best tone I've heard from a phonograph of comparable age." Anyone who takes more than a casual glance inside a Gabel machine will concur that he must have been a mechanical genius.

### IDENTITY A MYSTERY

But who *was* John Gabel? Some information trickled in from the slot machine collectors. There are some floor model gambling machines around that date back to the 1898-1903 period built by the Automatic Machine and Tool Company with John Gabel's name on them. Also, a serial number study of the later versions of the Automatic Entertainer indicated an astounding estimate of over 6,000 machines having originally been produced - during a time when no other automatic disc phonograph had been able to establish itself, and when a life cycle run of 2,000 to 3,000 units was considered successful.

The author's horn model received some publicity in 1983 when an article he produced was printed in Russ Ofria's *Nickel A Tune* magazine in a several-part series. It was then that a second example of the horn model surfaced with serial number 702. Without close inspection, the only thing that can be said is that the two extant examples appear nearly identical except that #702 has a cast front sign with the name *The Automatic Entertainer* and the author's #711 has a similar sign but cast in it is "Gabel's Automatic Entertainer."

### DIARY DISCOVERED

The second real break in the mystery finally came. Friend and noted author on collectables, Richard Bueschel of Mt. Prospect, Illinois, hinted to me one day that there existed a major and historically important document on John Gabel. He put me in contact with the owner, and subsequently one Saturday morning I received a copy of a several hundred page typewritten diary of John Gabel's entire life. Most important were the dozens of pages covering his trials, tribulations and thoughts while inventing the Automatic Entertainer. Also included were his perspectives on his competitors, and documentation of a colossal extended legal and competitive battle with the Victor Talking Machine Company which didn't even have a competitive product at the time.

So here, excerpted for relevancy, for the first

time anywhere, is the story of John Gabel and his Automatic Entertainer.

John Gabel, born in Hungary in 1872 and prevented by early illness from having more than two years of public school education, became an immigrant to the U.S. That was in 1886 when John was 14 years of age and before he could speak a word of English. His father was a nailsmith, which in the fashion of the day set John on a course of metalworking. He continued at odd jobs which were to help him produce some income during his stay with his brother in Philadelphia. Two years later, when John was 16, he was encouraged by a friend of the family to try his fortune in the city of opportunity — Chicago.

In Chicago he found great demand for machinists. Slowly he learned English. It was the age of the gear, the cog, the cam and the lever. Everybody was trying to do everything and anything with mechanics. He wound up with a good job at Felt & Tarrants, assembling the intricate mechanisms of adding machines known as Comptometers.

Gabel's skills skyrocketed, in part from the experience and in part due to his conviction that he was a "born machinist." During the ensuing eight years, he worked for several companies, including several early efforts at producing coin-operated gambling machine mechanisms.

Finally, in 1898, the "inevitable" occurred. John Gabel, with his energetic spirit, inventive mind, metal working skills and no money, became co-founder and president of his own fledgling company. A Chicago cabinet maker put up the funds and the cabinets for Gabel's own improved version of a floor model slot machine.

### THE GABEL "SLOTS" INTRODUCED

By Christmas of 1898, his Automatic Machine and Tool Company, with three employees, had its first all-mechanical floor model gambling machines ready for market. Acceptance was immediate even though Gabel had no training in selling techniques. By 1900, The Automatic Machine and Tool Company already employed 50 men. Perhaps only in America could a 26-year-old uneducated immigrant, self-taught in English and whose only skill was mechanical inventiveness, start his own company and grow to prosperity in two years!

But the story does not end there. We haven't gotten to the music yet. In 1903, he followed the lead of some other slot machine producers who sought to establish the legitimacy of the gambling machines through the installation of Swiss music boxes that played whenever a nickel was deposited for a chance at a payout.

During Christmas of 1903, Gabel went to see a Mr. Vosey from Lyon & Healy's Dept. Store who was in charge of the brass instruments and Swiss music boxes. After concluding the sale of music boxes, Vosey drew Gabel's attention to



The enclosed horn model of the Entertainer, probably from 1915. The case has been made taller to accommodate the interior horn covered by fretwork. This style usually had an electric motor which wound the mainspring, but this particular model was apparently designed (still with the crank) for use in a non-electrified area.  
*(Courtesy C. Hummel)*

the talking machines. Gabel was biased against their "noisiness" and lack of musical quality - undoubtedly a correct judgment of the Victors with front-mounted horns and the early type of rigid tonearms. But sometime in the Victor IV or V timeframe (ca. 1903), a newer tapered tonearm had been designed which made dramatic improvements in sound quality.

### GABEL STUDIES PHONOGRAPH

He took the Victor home along with a Vosey selection of ten records, and surprised himself by liking them so much that he played all ten every night for some time. Gabel recalls:

*While I listened to the music, I thought of the possibilities of this new talking machine for public use. At that time there was only one automatic nickel-in-the-slot instrument on the market that made money. It was an electric piano produced by Wurlitzer. It was very crude and the music was awful. It had a wooden roll with iron pegs driven into it.*

*While the roll was rotating, the pegs would contact the keys and operate the piano keys to produce music. The entire system was copied from the Swiss music box, but it was really the best on the market.*

We know that the machine he was referring to was the Wurlitzer Tonophone, indeed a crude affair, but it was the first on the market and Wurlitzer did well with it.

### INSPIRATION STRIKES

*It occurred to me that an automatic talking machine would give better music to the public as well as a variety of selections both instrumental and vocal. I made sketches of an instrument of this kind and could not dismiss it from my mind.*

This recollection is a rare opportunity in the research of automatic music machine history. Here 80 years later, we can read the thoughts of an important early inventor in the first person at the very moment of conception of the world's first automatic multiple-disc phonograph.

Gabel envisioned many advantages of this new machine, not the least of which was that, contrary to the gambling machines, it would be obviously legal to operate in all states. He couldn't give up his normal responsibilities of selling on the road, so development of a prototype went slowly.

*In the spring of 1905, the first model of my automatic talking machine was ready. It was very crude but worked well enough to demonstrate. I needed money... I had to make a model to be used for patterns and another to send to the patent attorney.*

Mikkelson, who had been making the beautiful wooden cases for Gabel's machines all along, reappeared as an investor with \$2,000 for a small piece of the company. Another \$2,000 came from Mr. Sherwin, the head of Chicago Hardware Foundry Co. The foundry was the supplier of castings to The Automatic

Machine and Tool Company and to others in the slot machine business in Chicago. This accounts for the similarity in appearance of the fancy leg castings on the first Entertainers and the earlier gambling machines produced in Chicago.

### THE FIRST MODEL... AND AN OMEN

In the middle of August, 1905, Gabel took a machine to the patent attorneys Peirce, Fisher and Clapp, who were fatefully also the patent attorneys for The Victor Talking Machine Company. By the end of October, the patterns were ready and Gabel had three music machines made.

*On Christmas day, 1905 we held a party at the company's office. We played the three machines, one after the other... and we all began to dance.*

A few days later, one of the machinists named the device the *Automatic Entertainer*. One was given to Joe Hallner, a Wisconsin operator and dealer in slots. There was no trouble with the mechanical part, but after three days the sound deteriorated. Hallner went through the machine in detail and Gabel concluded that the only thing wrong was record wear. "The original grooves were actually cut out." All three machines developed the same problem. Gabel recalls:

### NEEDLE CHANGER CONCEIVED

*To improve the sound was not in my line. I was a mechanic — not a musician. It was necessary for me to think fast. The first thing I did was to look for the cause of the record wear. That was easy. The needles had been made with a fine black diamond point, believing that the point would be permanent. I was mistaken in this as the continuous grind of the record wore down the fine point of the needle and the dull point wore out the records.*

*I wondered what could be used to substitute the diamond point so that the operator would not have to change the needle too often. First I experimented on an adjustable needle, using a steel wire which I fed through a brass needle and fastened it to the end of it. This gave a lot of grief. If I used a wire fine enough to reach the bottom of the record groove, it would cause vibration and the sound would not be clear enough. If the wire was stiff enough to prevent vibration, it would scratch and spoil the records. This convinced me that the record grooves were V-shaped and that it would be necessary to use a needle with a point to fit the V-shaped groove of the record. That is the reason why the Victor Talking Machine gave the best results when played with the Victor needle.*

*So I decided to make an automatic changing device. Within a week I had solved the problem and made a needle magazine as well as a movement in the machine to operate the magazine so that a fresh needle could be dropped into the sound box for every record.*

This was done in time to incorporate the needle changer in the diagram for the first patent application.

*The needle-changing mechanism completed my experimental work on the (mechanical part of the) Entertainer. The needle-changing mechanism was used on the Entertainer until 1929 — a period of 23 years.*

*When the experimental work on the mechanism was completed, I set my mind on improving the sound. That was my greatest problem. I worked day and night including Sundays ... until I was satisfied that I had the best sounding machine on the market. This included the Victor Talking Machine which was considered the best talking machine in existence.*

*In 1915 at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, the Judges decided that my machine was the best sounding machine and it was awarded the first prize (Gold Medal) in competition with all other talking machines including the Victor.*

But even back in 1906 when the Entertainer was put on the market, trouble brewed immediately with the Victor Talking Machine Co.

#### PATENT DISPUTES... AND MORE

The patent law firm was concerned about the conflict because they were in the middle and Victor was an enormous client. They arranged a meeting at the Victor factory in Camden, NJ, where Gabel had a machine crated and sent.

The meeting was with a Mr. Geisler, the manager, possibly of the legal department. Geisler's reaction to the Entertainer was:

*"This is a disgrace to our machine. We have a fine, rich looking machine and we are selling to the finest class of people in the best homes. This thing must be operated in the cheapest type of saloon and will play our records. It will cheapen our machine."*

The president, Eldridge Johnson, was in Europe and Geisler may have been interpreting Johnson's envisioning of the Victor machines as a genuine musical instrument intended for the best homes.

Before leaving Camden, Gabel was invited to tour the Victor factory, the laboratory, machine shop, assembly room and the record department. He recalls:

#### SHELLAC DISC MANUFACTURE

*All of those departments were interesting to me, but I was greatly impressed by the record department. I saw how records were made from crushed pulp to the finished record. The crushed pulp with other composition was put into a big boiler. After it was boiled, it was put into a crushing machine. From there the hot composition went through the rollers. Finally it came through the last rollers in 6 inch strips about 1/8" thick.*

*Then it was cut into 6" squares. The squares were brought to a hydraulic press. Next to the*

*press was a steam heated oven. These square pieces were placed into the oven to heat. The man at the press took them out one at a time and laid them in the press.*

*At the bottom of the press was a copper matrix of a certain kind of music. The top was just a round disc. After the hot composition was in the press, the man folded up the ends and let the press come down. Then the record was taken to a speed lathe where a girl fastened the record to a plate, ground off the rough edge and polished the record.*

That whole process fascinated Gabel. The details of the record grooves were the one thing that he was in the dark about when he was designing the Entertainer.

Upon Gabel's return to Chicago, Peirce of the law firm told him that Victor had a special fund of one million dollars on reserve for interference law suits. "If they do not like a person, they find a way to bring suit. Last year (in 1905) we put a firm in Michigan out of business."

Then ensued an interesting debate between Clapp and Peirce, both of the same law firm. The worry was the Berliner groove-driven reproducer patent. Victor had gotten so confident of its patent strength that it felt compelled to boast in ads in the *Talking Machine World*. The ads stressed the importance of its Berliner patent #534,543:

*"That the Victor Company controls the disc reproducing machine and disc record, where the reproducer is vibrated and propelled by the record. (Emphasis added) ...*

*... the Victor Company hesitates at anything like bragging, but the Victor Company is on top."*

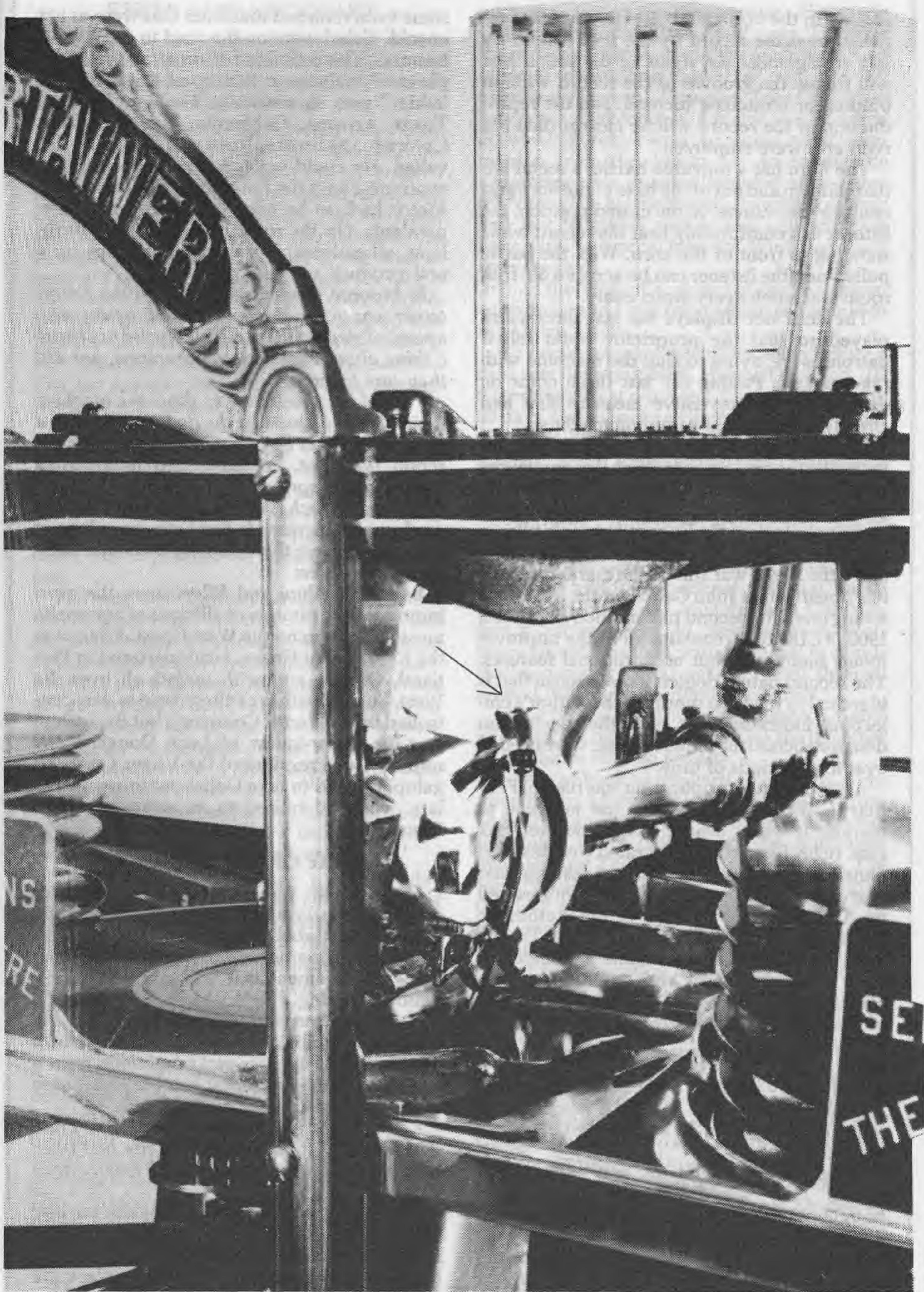
#### SMALL PATENT DETOUR PLANNED

Clapp said: "I mean that we can get around it, John. Is it possible to bring the sound box across the records by means of a screw instead of that free-swing motion?" Clapp felt this would get away from the Berliner patent and Gabel implemented it in one day.

The first patent #1,134,603 filed on February 26, 1906 shows the machine that must have been prototyped and then triplicated in late 1905. It reflects the addition of an early version of the needle changer in that it does not yet show the finger on the reproducer that positively pushes the new needle into place before playing a new record. The patent also does not show the change to the feed-screw propellant for the tone arm.

The machine shown in the patent drawing is therefore a pre-production model. Once the feed screw was added, the horn was moved to the center of the case and a spring-loaded telescopic connection made from the horn to the tone arm.

Also added was a rubber gasket and swivel pin connection on the back of the tone arm, which: "... forms a joint which will yield slightly to permit the sound box to sway



A close-up view of the first model, showing the heavy tone-arm with its distinctive cup mounted on the top of the reproducer. The new needle is gravity fed here and the arced finger moves down to push the old needle out. The vertical rods above are hollow and hold the needles one on top of the other. The needle gauge was used to load it.

slightly in the horizontal direction as it is propelled over the record by the feed screw. By this arrangement the stylus of the sound box will follow the grooves of the record without binding or scratching thereon, and the reproduction of the record will be clearer than if a rigid arm were employed."

The horn has a movable baffle: a metal tab that slides in and out of the base of the horn and controls the volume. In the closed position, the listener can comfortably hear the record while standing in front of the horn. With the baffle pulled out, the listener can be across a 30' foot room and catch every word easily.

The coin slot displays the last three coins played so that the proprietor could tell if patrons were trying to slug the machine with fake nickels. Putting the last three coins on display was a preventive measure that had already been used in gambling machines.

Another feature was the visible coin counter for use by the proprietor to check that employees weren't stealing from the coin box. The only other early automatic music machine that sported a coin counter was the Encore Automatic Banjo invented in 1893 and commercialized in 1896. Since the Banjo was still on the market in 1905, it is possible that John Gabel got the idea from seeing one. The second patent, filed August 18, 1909 (#1,182,551), contains all of the improvements mentioned but no additional features. The second patent depicts a mechanism that is identical to the horn model in the author's collection, indicating that once the mechanism design stabilized, no improvements were needed over long periods of time.

After the patent application was filed in February, 1906, Gabel brought the machine to market. It was a beauty in its quartered oak case, richly figured and decorated with bevelled panels and opulent nickel plated castings, and best of all, the large polished brass horn gleamed on top. This 1905 version of the Automatic Entertainer was an immediate success. During 1906, Gabel as salesman made a number of sales to music houses and to dealers of the Victor Talking Machine Company. The success of the machine did not go unnoticed by Victor.

### VICTOR THREATENS SUIT

In January of 1907, Pierce told Gabel that Victor wanted to file suit. In a rare burst of ethics for that period, he said that he decided to defend Gabel:

"John, money is not the only thing in the world. They would buy me as they have bought others. No, John, I value my pride and honor more than the almighty dollar they are slinging at me. If the Victor Company brings suit against you, they will find me fighting on your side."

Soon afterwards, the suit was indeed filed and Peirce did defend. However, Gabel's business was immediately influenced. The dealers of the Victor Co. backed off immediately and

some even returned machines that were as yet unsold. Gabel went on the road to protect his business. This is the kind of situation where the phrase "loneliness at the top of the corporate ladder" gets its meaning. To New Orleans, Texas, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois he travelled. He could not talk Victor dealers into continuing with the *Entertainer* due to the hold Victor had, so he concentrated on the independents. On the road, he found other problems, all endemic to getting acceptance for a new product:

*In Monroe (Louisiana?) I found the Entertainer was in the hands of a piano dealer who operated electric pianos. His help did not know a thing about automatic mechanisms, nor did they care to learn.*

*I asked the proprietor to show the machine to me. When I removed the door I pointed to a small spring that had been unhooked from the screw feed nut. Someone had deliberately unhooked the spring.*

*Early in March, 1907, a short time after the earthquake, I arrived in San Francisco. Two of the music houses there had my machine, Bacigalupi and Eilers.*

Both Bacigalupi and Eilers were the most important distributors of all kinds of automatic music machines on the West Coast. Eilers was the Eilers Piano House, headquartered in Portland, Oregon and with outlets all over the West Coast. Neither of these houses was controlled by the Victor Company, but Bacigalupi was the father-in-law of Leon Douglass, the retired Vice-President of the Victor Co. Bacigalupi offered to take Gabel out to see Douglass, who had retired to an estate near San Francisco.

### A SLIP OF THE TONGUE?

On the visit, Gabel met Douglass and his wife, Victoria, on a leisurely Sunday afternoon. After lunch, Gabel managed to chill the afternoon by putting his foot in his mouth with an innocent statement that was taken to have a double meaning.

*... in the afternoon we walked through the orange and lemon grove. It was the first time in my life that I had ever picked a lemon from a tree and I remarked that it was the first lemon that I had picked since my marriage.*

*I don't know why I made that remark. I had no reason for it as my married life had been very happy. I suppose the remark was made to be funny.*

*Mr. Bacigalupi was standing beside me and kicked me in the shin. Mrs. Douglass turned and walked away. Then Bacigalupi told me that my remark was very much out of place. He told me his daughter and Douglass were not very happy together. I regretted the remark, not only for the sake of the Douglasses, but for Bacigalupi, who had been so kind to me. We soon left, but the parting was somewhat cold.*

## EVERY PART NECESSARY

In order to show how important it was to have a good man on the road in the amusement machine business, Gabel recalls a few more stories from that whirlwind trip:

*At a music store in Sacramento there were two Entertainers. I was informed that the machines were continuously out of order. I looked at the machine and asked what had become of the needle magazine. The mechanic said: 'That is what gives us so much trouble.' He brought the needle magazines to me and, as soon as I touched them I asked how the oil got on them. He told me the needles were stuck in the tubes and so he oiled them. I assured him that the needles would not stick in the tubes if the tubes were filled properly. I showed him that the needle was too light to slide through the tube with oil in it.*

*I gave the magazines a gasoline bath and during reassembly I asked for the needle gauge. He did not know what I wanted. I showed him where the round steel plate with a small hole in it should be placed at the top of the needle magazine to keep the dust out of the tubes and to prevent the needles from falling out.*

*The man said: 'I do not use that thing.' I told him he would not have trouble if he had filled the needle magazine through that needle gauge. I picked up a needle on which there was a burr. I tried to put it through the gauge and it would not go through. Then I removed the plate and put the needle into one of the tubes. It stuck in the middle of the tube. In this way I showed him the importance of the gauge to prevent the clogging of the mechanism.*

*I explained that our factory would not put a part on the machine unless it was needed and that this needle gauge was necessary.*

That is a lesson that many a modern day restorer could well learn about all kinds of automatic music machines with mysterious and seemingly unimportant features. These machines should be put back to *original* condition — it generally proves out that the designers knew what they were doing.

## RECESSION OF 1907

The year 1907 was notable for its national economic crisis which added to the stiff competitive methods of The Victor Talking Machine Company. Lyon and Healy bought an *Entertainer* and actually shipped it to Victor to ask permission to sell it. Victor returned an emphatic "No" and the sample machine was returned to Gabel with the message: "The Victor Company will not permit us to handle it." Such was the power of Victor.

Then it seemed the big break came in August of 1907 when Howard Wurlitzer himself came to see John Gabel. Wurlitzer was without question the marketing powerhouse in the country and Howard was very favorably impressed

with the Automatic Entertainer. He made Gabel a proposition that would make Wurlitzer the exclusive distributor of the machine. Given business conditions, the offer was like "an angel from heaven." However, John Gabel was becoming a bit more of a realist and he asked Howard Wurlitzer how he would obtain permission from the Victor Co. to handle the *Entertainer*. He recalled Howard saying that the Victor Co. had nothing to do with Wurlitzer and that Wurlitzer makes and sells anything they wish. In typical Howard Wurlitzer brash style, he said:

*"... if the Victor Co. does not like it, let them come to us and I will talk to them as I would to my Dutch Uncle."*

To prove his good intentions, even before a deal was consummated, Howard ordered 100 *Entertainers* that same day. During the ensuing 30 days, Gabel made all the machines he could, a total of 26. These were still the early horn models, which were all shipped to Cincinnati.

## VICTOR PRESSURES WURLITZER

Soon after, Howard Wurlitzer returned to Chicago saying that he had been called to Camden, and Geisler put the arm on him. Wurlitzer had a jobbers contract with the Victor Co. for the cities of Cincinnati and Chicago, and if Victor cancelled their contract, Wurlitzer would be stuck with \$700,000 in goods that apparently could not be resold through normal distribution without a contract.

Using typical naive business judgment, Gabel let Wurlitzer out of its obligations for the other 74 machines with no penalty.

So it was back to the hard selling life, compounded by a forced move of the factory from 43 South Canal. The Northwestern Depot was scheduled to be built where the Automatic Machine and Tool Company was located. The factory was moved to 210 Ann Street. While all this was going on, the Victor lawsuit day of reckoning was approaching, and Gabel was spending an increasing amount of time being drilled in preparation by his attorneys. So far, 1907 was not a great year for him.

## GABEL VS. VICTOR

*This case meant a lot to me. A decision in my favor would mean new life to me and the business and it would mean bankruptcy should the decision be against me. On the last day, Mr. Clapp instructed me to send one of my machines to the court room and to set it up so that I would be sure it worked. I followed instructions.*

*The Victor Company's man set up one of their machines in the court room so that the stage was all set for the hearing in the afternoon. Judge Kohlsaat presided. The attorney for Victor, Mr. Pettit, addressed the court and explained the broad claims of the Berliner patent. Then he demonstrated on his exhibit the claims that were involved in the infringement suit. The judge had a paper before him. No*

doubt it was a copy of the Berliner patent.

Mr. Clapp addressed the Court. In his calm slow manner, he started to talk. Finally, Judge Kohlsaas told him that it was not necessary to pace back and forth nor to talk further about the Berliner patent as he knew it by heart.

Mr. Clapp begged the Court to permit him to demonstrate the movement on his opponent's machine. He said: 'Your Honor, the broad claim of the Berliner patent is a swinging arm with a reproducer on the end. The stylus of the reproducer sets into the groove of the record and the grooves of the record then carry the reproducer and arm across the record. The Gabel machine has no swinging arm. Neither does the groove of the record feed the reproducer across it. I will demonstrate this fact by playing the Gabel machine.'

He said: 'Your Honor, the reproducer and arm on this machine are carried across the record by a screw feed, I will now disconnect the screw feed. Please watch the results. As soon as he disconnected the screw feed, the reproducer continued to repeat the same sound.'

He said: 'Now, Your Honor, you can see that we are not infringing on the Berliner patent.'

Judge Kohlsaas gave his decision then and there by saying that he could see no similarity in the two machines, so there could be no infringement and the case was dismissed. The Victor Company had lost the case and it gave me new life. With a free mind I was able to think of improving the business and to increase production although the Victor Company continued to spread trouble for me all over the country with their antagonistic attitude and false statements.

### VICTORY IS SWEET

The year 1908 began on a better note. Sales were increasing and Gabel began assembling a network of State Agents. Joe Hallner from Wisconsin began buying machines for resale and by 1909, Mr. C.L. Fox bought a number of machines for St. Louis and surrounding areas.

In 1909, Gabel made some changes to the *Entertainer*. While the mechanism stayed the same (it had proven to be very reliable), he added an electric motor to replace the crank. He also replaced the external horn with an enclosed horn covered by grillwork in a taller case to accommodate the horn. The fancy castings were eliminated and the overall appearance was directed more towards a less showy, more refined device.

Collectors today prize the horn models of most phonograph types, but back in the 1910 era the horn was considered a necessary evil and awkward as well. The new *Entertainer* with enclosed horn was considered an improvement in appearance then. The front bevelled glass window was retained so that the mechanical intricacies of the machine were still on view. The 1909 version achieved great success with the Victor Suit settled and an improving

network of dealers gradually established.

A brief cloud came on the horizon when in 1910 a well-known and successful distributor of music machines in Philadelphia, Julius Wellner, informed Gabel that he was interfering with Wellner's invention.

### ANOTHER PATENT INTERFERENCE

That was news to me as I had never heard about it before. I asked Mr. Wellner to accompany me to our attorney's office, which he did. Wellner was truthful enough. He told us that his machine would not work, and that the purpose of his visit to Chicago was to make arrangements to be a distributor for my machine, and that a \$10 commission on each machine should be applied as royalty.

The attorneys talked Gabel into the idea that the royalty was low enough to be a better proposition than an expensive legal fight. So the deal was agreed, and Wellner bought "a substantial number of machines and we parted on friendly terms."

Gabel's first patent had been filed in February, 1906 and had still not issued in 1910. As to why the patent application took so long, Gabel recalled:

I had confidence in my attorneys, they had proven themselves honorable when they fought my case with the Victor Co. when I did not have the money to pay them. Mr. Clapp purposely held up the patent papers. His purpose was to get all of the interferences out of the way so that a clear patent with all 106 claims would be granted.

Resolving the Wellner situation certainly was part of that plan. In 1911, Fox moved his headquarters from St. Louis to Kansas City, and he was doing good business there. Wellner was doing well in the East; Gabel continued selling machines personally through Indiana and Wisconsin as well as in his home state of Illinois.

In 1912, The Victor Company brought another suit against Gabel. Gabel was on the stand for 17 days and answered 851 questions. His laudable stamina in overcoming obstacle after obstacle was once again rewarded. In early 1913, he learned that he had won the case and accordingly 23 more claims were allowed in the patent for a total of 129 claims. Shortly thereafter the Victor Co. appealed their case all the way to the Supreme Court. After a costly preparation process, Gabel and his attorneys showed up in Washington D.C. on the appointed day in the summer of 1913, only to find that Victor abandoned the lawsuit that morning. They were playing an interference and cost escalation game, but their bluff had finally been called. That marked the end of Victor's legal attacks.

In 1913, a Mr. E.S. Garrett who managed the Columbia Phonograph store in St. Louis, became so impressed with the *Entertainer* that he set up an agency in California and it became successful as the Golden Gate Music Company of San

San Francisco. Hundreds of machines were sold there.

### STRUGGLES TO IMPROVE TONE

*For years we had been buying sheet mica here in the U.S. We would then peel it down to size and select the clear sheets to punch out our diaphragms. If the mica was not clear, the sound was cracked. If it was too thin it squeaked and if it was too thick the sound was dull.*

*When I began using German mica, the sound was greatly improved. But during the summer of 1914 Germany declared war on France and England and the mica diaphragms were no longer available. I decided to experiment with metal. Steel was too stiff, brass and copper would not do. Then I tried aluminum and developed a good sounding diaphragm that was far superior to mica.*

In July of 1915, Gabel received a surprise telegram from Garrett in which he related the excellent news that the Entertainer had received first prize for Phonograph exhibits at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Before the end of that same day, a representative of *Talking Machine World* magazine called and said: "Mr. Gabel, have you heard the news in San Francisco?" Gabel thought he was referring to the good news and showed the telegram. The reporter said: "Oh, that is wrong. I have received a telegram from San Francisco stating that Marshall Field & Company was awarded first prize. I have a story here from Marshall Field & Company for *Talking Machine World*."

### GOLD MEDAL CONFUSION

It would appear that Gabel didn't quite have the full story about Marshall Field. An all day perusal of the *Talking Machine World's* of 1915 by Allen Koenigsberg produced a mention in the April 15, 1915 issue that the Cheney booth was *designed* by Marshall Field & Co. and other hints about a forthcoming unusual machine which apparently never did appear.

Gabel perhaps did not know that Field's was only a distributor for Cheney. He goes on to recall that the Field story had to be retracted and that the Exposition Commissioners closed the Field (Cheney?) exhibit for making false statements. Allen Koenigsberg could find no such printed retraction, although he did find a September 15, 1915 *Talking Machine World* mention of the Gabel win:

*"... the Entertainer was awarded the gold medal for automatic talking machines by the exposition authorities. This includes an award ribbon and large banner. Substantial shipments of Gabel's Entertainer have been made recently to Hawaii, the Philippine Islands and Australia."*

The Gabel exhibit was in the Palace of Liberal Arts. Upon entering the Palace, he found Garrett in his booth in the midst of emptiness surrounding the immediate vicinity. All the other major phonograph companies (Victor, Columbia and possibly Cheney) had cleared

out. Garrett said: "Oh, Mr. Gabel, you should have been here to see the fuss that those fellows made and how angry they were."

The Victor Company appealed to the Commissioners and accused them of unfairness. Gabel recalls:

*They had placed over a dozen machines throughout the grounds, free of charge, as an ad. Their action (the appeal) did not appeal to the public favor. The people were talking about them and said that they were selfish and conceited and sore because they did not get the first prize.*

Mr. Charles Moore, President of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition congratulated me on my fine exhibit and wonderful invention. Then he presented me with the Gold Medal which was the highest award for any product in the Exposition. There was always a crowd at our booth. The people were fascinated by the nickel-plated mechanism which was constantly in motion, changing records and needles automatically. There was an extra needle magazine which was kept filled — ready to use when the other was empty.

Gabel had learned some principles of marketing. He tells us that he had one additional special version at the Exposition which was the one referred to above that drew all the crowds:

*Before the fair, I had one mechanism nickel-plated and when it was assembled we enclosed it in a glass case. It was in operation continuously at the booth.*

Can you imagine a Gabel mechanism all nickeled and in a glass case? For anyone who has seen the mechanism, it would not appear difficult to imagine the captivating power it would have.

### OFFICIAL EXPOSITION RECOGNITION

Moore had indicated that Gabel would get a full page in the *History*, and he kept his word. Here are some excerpts from the *Official History*:

*"The International Jury of Awards gave Gabel's Automatic Entertainer a Gold Medal, and the award was made because of superiority of tone reproducing qualities of this machine as well as its many other excellent points."*

The Jury took into account that the Automatic Entertainer possessed many novel and useful features. It was thoroughly appreciated that in the field of mechanical entertaining, Gabel's machine occupied a position which would commend itself to those who desired to use it as a coin operating machine, and also to those who wished to have a practical as well as ornamental sound reproducing device ... it would give to the owner no trouble, as its construction was such as to make it 'fool proof'. It obviated the necessity of having an expert mechanic to attend to its needs.

There were two styles shown at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, one being the instrument used for commercial purposes. This instrument

was so constructed as to play from one to twenty nickels at a time, while the other was the home machine, which was operated by the mere pressing of a button.

Both of the machines held twenty-four standard records, which were so arranged as to permit the playing of any selection preferred, or if the music lover desired, the Entertainer would play continuously, the machine changing records and needles automatically thus giving a lengthy concert.

The motor, which used either a direct or alternating current, was used to wind the machine, and for places where current was not available, a handle was provided so that the machine could be prepared for its work with one turn of the crank.

The trouble with the majority of sound reproducing devices has been the constant care and attention which must be given to them, and this has been done away with in the Gabel machine.

Another point in its favor is its handsome exterior, possessing a rich and dignified appearance, and from an ornamental standpoint, the machine was so constructed as to grace drawing room or salon.

The fact that numerous machines were ordered by Commissioners and visitors from foreign lands where high class music is appreciated, is another evidence of the worth of the Gabel Automatic Entertainer.

Mechanical experts were very much interested in the machine and were loud in their praise of its construction from a mechanical viewpoint. They were unanimous in declaring that Mr. Gabel has given to the world a device mechanically correct in every detail."

Orders started pouring in from all over California and all over the world. John Gabel had finally made an indelible impression for the fine mechanic and inventor he was. While this was 1915, ten long years after having built his first three Entertainers, it still would be ten more years before anyone else would catch up with an automatic selector disc mechanism. He even anticipated the joining of light and sound in the later neon wonders by installing an electric light bulb (1909) above the records. Incredibly, the original bulb still burns brightly in the enclosed-horn model at the APM Archives.

### AN AVALANCHE OF ORDERS

1915 was a pivotal year. 1916 opened with a bang. Orders were coming in so fast that it was impossible to fill them promptly. Gabel still employed 50 men, but his distributors informed him that they needed quantities such as 500 for Minneapolis/St. Paul, another 500 for Southern California, and so on.

The cases were still made outside and the mechanism was nearly identical to the first 1905 machine except for the enclosed horn, the motor and double capacity needle changer. We learned from the Wurlitzer contract of 1907

that capacity was perhaps 30-35 per month, or 350 to 400 per year with 50 people. Still, it is remarkable how few survive. Perhaps the policy of the jukebox industry to destroy older models contributed to this situation.

Capacity was apparently eventually expanded and the agent network grew. In 1918, Gabel changed the name of the company from The Automatic Machine & Tool Co. to the John Gabel Manufacturing Co. because he wanted credit after all the lean years and after the protracted fight with Victor.

Gabel went on producing the Entertainer until 1928, an incredible 23 year life span. In 1928-1929 a number of competitors came on the market with electrically amplified machines that used more permanent needles. These devices avoided the need for a needle changer and were free to compete.

The first Capehart was still acoustic and ran awry of the Gabel patents. The Capehart Automatic Phonograph Co. filed suit against Gabel in September of 1929 attacking the validity of the patents. On January of 1930, a Charles Bartholomew of Chicago also filed suit to do battle over the patents. These suits dragged on until 1935 when the Gabel patents expired their 17-year legal life. All suits were dropped in October of 1935 and the field re-opened for reasons of both patent expiration and technological advance.

John Gabel went on to design and produce his own electrically amplified jukeboxes in oak cabinets. He continued doing so until 1936 when he retired at age 65. The John Gabel Manufacturing Co. continued in the jukebox business, even joining the plastics revolution, until 1949 when it dissolved and reportedly sold some assets and patents to Rockola.

John Gabel died in 1954 at the age of 83. His obituaries in the local papers in Chicago made some reference to his major accomplishment:

"John Gabel, 83, of 253 Linden, Glencoe, who manufactured the world's first disc-record coin operated jukebox, died Friday ...

Mr. Gabel in 1898 founded the Automatic Machine and Tool Co. which later became the John Gabel Manufacturing Co., at Racine and Lake."

The lack of advertising and other promotional material from his early sales efforts has contributed to John Gabel's dropping into near obscurity. The discovery of his early machine and his diary (with his secretary's comments), and the subsequent disclosure of this new information in articles such as this one, should serve to complement the record of early endeavors in the field of automatic music.

John Gabel's contributions will now be a legitimate and remembered part of the history of automatic music machines. □

*Several existing Entertainers lack the needle changing magazine; should any of these turn up, please notify APM. Any comments or additional info will be forwarded to Rick Crandall.*

# NEWLY DISCOVERED EDISON LETTERS REVEAL DIAMOND DISC SECRETS

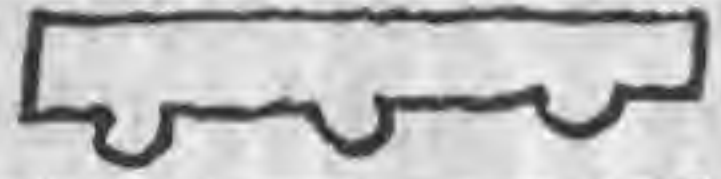
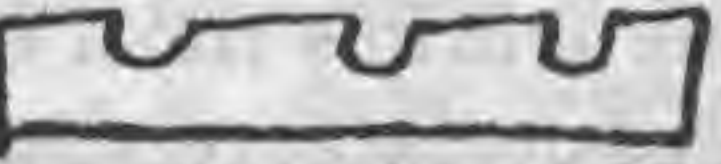
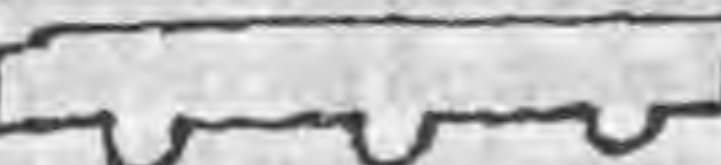
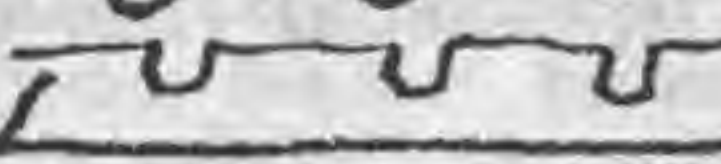
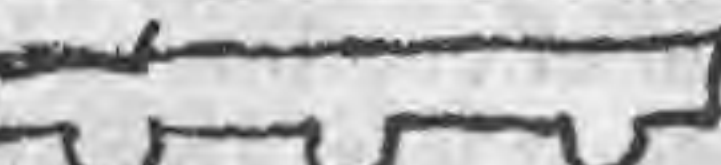
As a result of his correspondence with Theodore Edison, Ron Dethlefsen has uncovered new documentation on the development of the Diamond Disc and the manufacturing problems involved. Compared to the production of lateral cut 78's (see APM, Vol. I, No. 9), Edison DD's obviously required much greater laboratory expertise. The two letters below, both written by Thomas Edison to his son Theodore over 64 years ago, should be read in connection with George Frow's new book on the history of the Diamond Disc machine (pp. 214-231).

Feb 25, 1920

"Theodore,

We have 1400 baths for plating Copper discs. It requires 70 hours to plate each disc. This is the order of plating:

Starting with a metallic male master of which we only have one.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| A |  | master only <i>one</i>                                      |
| B |  | female from this  |
| C |  | male from A   |
| D |  | female from C   |
| E |  | working mould from D.<br>This mould is used in the presses. |

We want 200 moulds E daily including Sunday's. These 200 Moulds E are not all the same tune, where we have a new tune we want to supply various numbers of prints.

What we want is tables showing total capacity of our 1400 baths of working Mould's- All the moulds except E can be stripped from each other.

As it is now operated they get it all balled up. They start a master & when the product reaches D stage they find they have far too many of D as they would produce more working Moulds E than we could use. On the other hand there may be a shortage of D & we have to run these 3, 6 or 9 days longer to get enough Es.

What we want is tables so if we will know just what will happen starting with 1 A of 1 tune, also another A of another tune, & just how many Bs, C & D are to be made to give any required number of E of one tune to keep ALL the baths full at all times.

They just discharged.-

I have told Charles that he should hire a mathematician Because it requires that kind of a mind — Both of us been figuring 2 days & can't get head or tail of it —

Each month we get out a list of new tunes. Some we want 30000 records, some 20000 & some high price on 5000.

Want to get those thru in shortest time. We also want to print from 3000 to 10000 Each of old tunes to keep up our stock.

Each E working mould will average 500 Records before worn out.

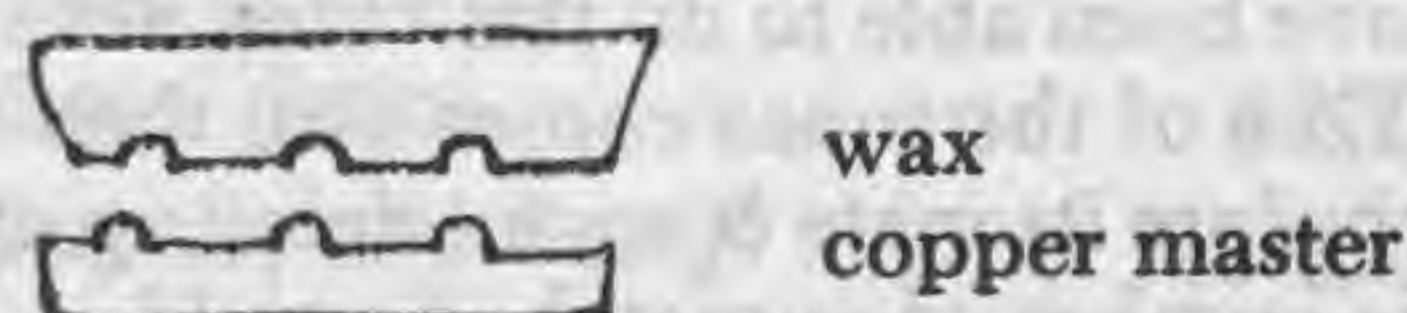
Suppose we were short of Ave Maria & wanted to stock up 5000, we could make 2 E in 70 hours, these going into press would produce 100 daily — We get 50 prints *daily* from each mould - hence each day would give us 100 Records. In 10 days Moulds would have to be discarded for wear, therefore we must have I think 10 E to get 5000 - of course we could make 20 of E of Ave Maria & get them quicker but that would crowd out another tune we wanted.

Can you help us out with tables so ordinary man cant (*sic*) start right & bring to E any result wanted & producing 200 E daily 7 days in week. We need it quickly."

*E*

March 5, 1920

"Ted —



We only make one from the wax but generally make 3 wax record & make 3 copper prints, 1 from each wax record, 2 of these we put in Vault. 1 we make the female from & put the Master Copper record in Vault.

Now with this female we plate 10 males, we can probably plate more than 10 probably 15 before it is spoiled — also We could use one even 2 of the Copper Master from the wax & instead of plating off but one female, we could plate off - 4 or 5. or even 10 - and still have 2 good Copper Masters in the Vault & be safe.

Remember always we can plate 10 from *any*

Copper or Nickel Mould by the Selenium process with very small chance of hurting it.

You should figure out results & tables for each process —

1st using 1 of the 3 master prints, from which a single female is obtained

or 2nd Using the same Cu [copper] master to plate several females.

3rd or using 2 masters to plate 5 from each.

Note that some of our old tunes there is only 1 master left in that case we must be cautious & only make one female & further one put some final females in Vault in Case we lost our single master.

Write to Hayes of music room & find out how many tunes are usually issued monthly by use & How long after he makes up the list do they start on it in the plating dept, & how long before the working moulds are ready so whole List is ready for shipment & also for *announcement*, the later comes 1st of Course.

Also if they issue supplements, How many tunes in each & tell all about it —

Also the method they have for keeping up a supply of old records —

They are short 75% of all our old good tunes & always have been - I should think we should arrange the pair so that 1 double facer of the best tunes could be used daily — I mean by this 1 mould (2 tunes) should be running all the time. If we had 48 tunes then we would be using 4 presses out of 65 with these 48 mould (12 to a press) — as we make 50 prints per day per mould we would have a steady supply in any event of 2400 daily —

As we have no system or tables or men we never have been able to do this - they never match. One of the tunes comes thru then 2 months before its mate & so on, tying up an immense number of unmatched moulds -

With the information you get from Hayes & what you have I hope you will be able to work out a system of tables & the best & quickest process & *quickly*??

WE actually average 500 prints for each OK mould - probably 450 would be safer as we lose some in the baths."

E

(March 5th letter mailed from Ft. Myers, FL)  
[Previous letter - 2/25 - mailed from Orange, NJ]

## † FILM PIONEER HONORED † BY PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM

The early days of the motion picture industry and an unknown chapter in the history of sound films will be the focus of a major exhibition. *Peddler of Dreams: Siegmund Lubin and the Creation of the Motion Picture Industry* is scheduled to open in May of 1984 at the Museum of American Jewish History in the heart of historic Philadelphia. Rare Lubin film footage, posters, photographs, costumes and other artifacts, supplemented by the personal reminiscences of those who knew and worked with Lubin, will be used to recreate the lost world of early filmmaking "when Hollywood was in Philadelphia."

A young immigrant who came to America in 1876 (several years after Berliner), Lubin came to be known as "the Rockefeller of the Movies." At the start of his career, he was a skilled and highly successful optician who listed President Grant among his clients. In 1896, he began to experiment with lenses of a different sort — with "Life Motion Pictures" and projectors — and by 1904 had established one of the world's most extensive networks for the manufacture, distribution and exhibition of motion pictures, using the 35mm standard sprocketed film developed by Edison.

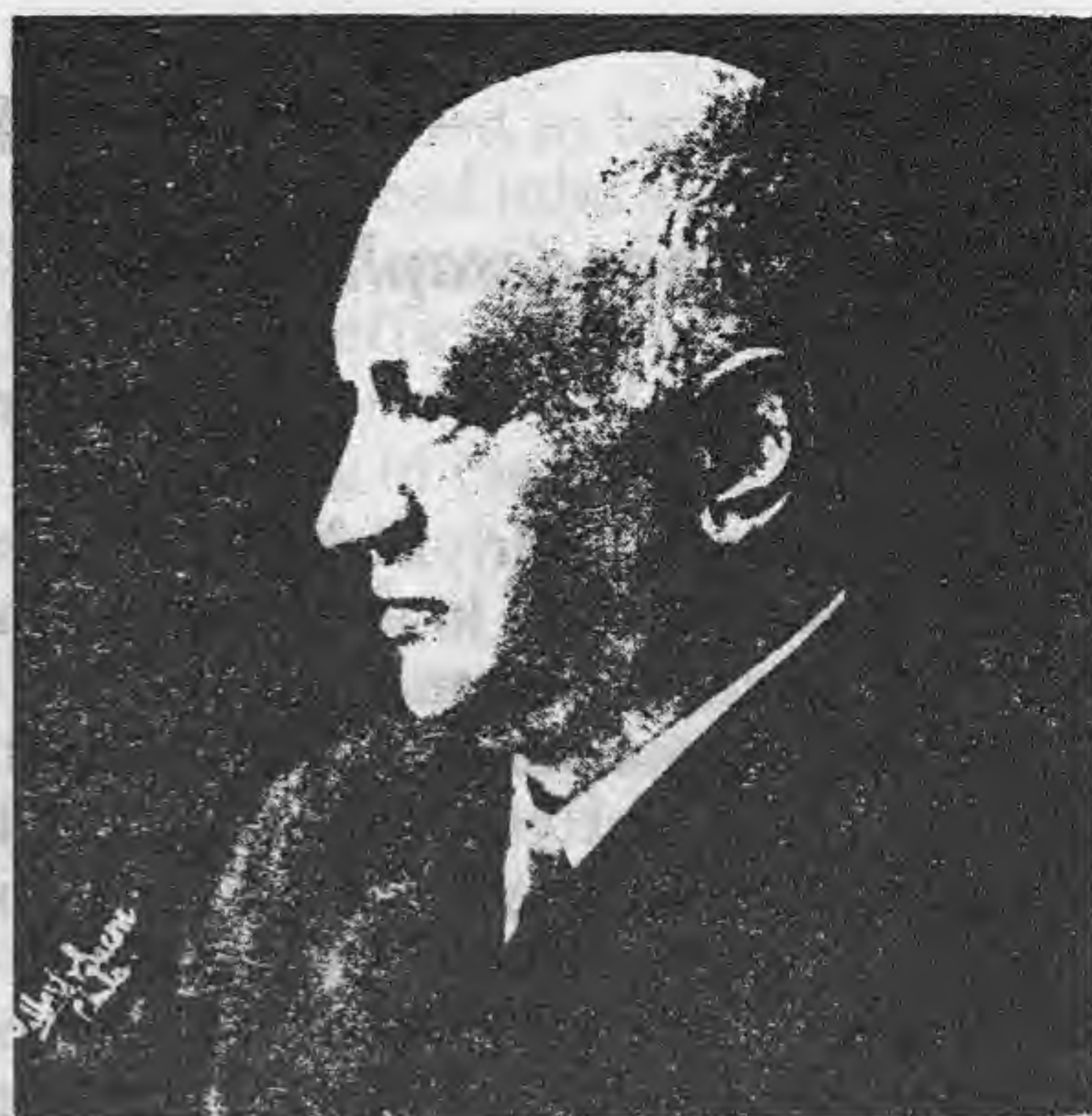
Although the dream of combining sound and film went back to at least 1889, Lubin was apparently the first, in 1904, to attempt actual commercial distribution of sound movies to other showmen. According to ads in the *New York Clipper*, Lubin in August and September of that year made available an outfit with the choice of 5 films, synchronized to existing Monarch 10" records. Most of the selections were instrumental in nature - one was vocal - and a Victor talking machine worth \$37.50 (a Victor III?) was included. The Museum has made every attempt to recreate the original "package", as well as other aspects of Lubin's life.

Before World War I, the Lubin studios at Twentieth Street and Indiana Avenue in Philadelphia and at the Betzwood Estate near Valley Forge were among the largest, most technologically advanced in the world. Thousands of films (mostly silent) came from these and other Lubin studios in Jacksonville, FL, Phoenix, AZ, Newport, RI, and San Diego and Los Angeles, CA. Among the still-remembered stars to appear were comedian Oliver Hardy, Marie Dressler, Jacob

(Cont'd from previous page)

Adler, and the notorious Evelyn Nesbit Thaw. A tragic film vault explosion in 1914 (the same year as Edison's conflagration) destroyed all of Lubin's films and in the process burned the Lubin studios from the pages of history.

The exhibition at the Museum is co-sponsored by the Philadelphia Free Library's Theatre Collection Lubin Archive and is being developed in cooperation with Lubin archivists and biographers Joseph Eckhardt and Linda Kowall. They ask if any APM readers have additional material on Lubin's life and work. The Museum is located at Independence Mall East, 55 N. 5th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, or by phone at (215) 923-3811. □



Siegmund Lubin

**ALWAYS  
IN THE LEAD**

**LUBIN'S**

**NEW IMPROVED  
PATENT FILMS**

**LATEST INVENTION IS THE  
COMBINATION of INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, SONG  
and SPEECH with LIFE MOTION PICTURES.**

You see the Black Face Comedian in Life-motion Pictures on the screen, and you hear him talk and sing at the same time. You see the Cornet Soloist playing and at the same time you hear the melody he plays.

**MARVELOUS  
GREATEST  
HITS**

**CINEOPHONE FILMS**

**MOVING  
PICTURES  
SPEAK AND SING**

Almost every showman has a Talking Machine. Use your own machine and the following records:

<b>2608 DAISY DONOHUE</b> (Trombone Solo)	-	-	<b>100 Feet</b>
<b>2547 BANJO 'LIZE</b> (Black Face Comedy and Song)	-	-	<b>100 Feet</b>
<b>2496 OUR OWN MAKE POLKA</b> (Cornet Solo)	-	-	<b>100 Feet</b>
<b>2828 MILITARY SERENADE</b> (Violin Solo)	-	-	<b>100 Feet</b>
<b>212 HAPPY DAYS IN DIXIE</b> (Xylophone Solo)	-	-	<b>100 Feet</b>

**AND 10 OTHERS.**

Our new **CINEOPHONE FILM CATALOGUE** will soon contain **ONE HUNDRED CINEOPHONE FILMS** of the **LATEST KNOWN SINGERS, DANCERS and MUSICIANS.** Write quick for our illustrated Catalogue if you want to be first in the **NEWEST AND BEST PAYING FIELD.**

**100 NEW COMIC AND MISCELLANEOUS FILMS NOW READY.  
ALL \$5.50 PER 50 FEET.**

**1904 EXPOSITION MODEL CINEOGRAPH**, with Stereopticon Combined, including Calcium Lamp, Electric Lamp, Adjustable Rheostat, for **\$75**

**S. LUBIN, 21 S. Eighth St., Philadelphia, Pa.**  
**Largest Manufacturer in the World of Life Motion Machines and Films.**

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Edison Phonograph Monthly, Vol's I - VIII (1903-1910), 180 - 312 pp. ea.*

George Blacker

"Good morning, Mr. Blake! I've been expecting you to drop in almost any time, since the factory sent me your letter of inquiry and invited me to follow up on it. I can assure you that you're making a wise choice in buying a cylinder phonograph; even the average cylinders have sound at least as good, if not better, than you get from the discs — less surface noise for sure — and the tonal quality of the Edison cylinder beats the best discs all hollow. And now that Edison has introduced the four-minute Amberol records, you can get the longest playing time available on any record, usually for half the price of a 12-inch disc. If you go in for opera, the most expensive operatic Amberol will only cost you \$2.00; just look at the prices some other disc companies are asking for their "classical" records!

"Now, as regards your phonograph: do you want something you can move about from place to place or do you just want to keep it in one spot? If you don't expect to move it much, I'd recommend the Amberola. It's an elegant piece of furniture, as well as a high-performance phonograph. And if your missus objects to a horn hanging out and catching dust, it's the only one for you, since the horn is solidly enclosed inside the cabinet. There's also plenty of storage space inside the four drawers. If \$200.00 is a little more than you'd care to spend right now, I can offer any number of portable models equipped with the new space-saving vertical cygnet horn. You won't have any complaints about sound quality from those, I assure you. What do you say we listen to a few of the latest records on some of these machines in the listening booth, and compare them? If there are any records in particular you'd like to hear, I'll be glad to get them out for you....."

*Whoops!* I beg your pardon! I've been temporarily displaced in time. That's what comes of reading the entire series of Wendell Moore's reissues of *The Edison Phonograph Monthly*, the latest of which (Vol. VIII) has just recently been offered to the public. I'd hesitated before about getting the whole set, not knowing quite what to expect, but after reading through the eight beautiful red and gold hard-bound volumes, I'm hooked, even

if I am thinking like an Edison dealer!

Our thanks for the whole series should go primarily to two people: first, the long-time Edison dealer, M.R. McMillion of DeLand, Florida, who saved every issue from March 1903 through December 1916. Then, of course, a special vote of thanks is due Wendell Moore for courageously initiating the re-issue project with Volume I in 1976. Wendell knew his was one of only two known *complete* sets of EPM, and despite the initial expense he was determined to bring them to the wider audience they deserved. They have been regularly advertised in APM and elsewhere with the result that the early volumes are in short supply (fewer than 1000 were issued). Each volume contains 12 monthly issues exactly as they were sent to Edison dealers.

One of the reasons for my initial reluctance to get the set was that I anticipated primarily industry 'puffery' and back-slapping. I am glad to report, however, that the material is really substantial, for both machine *and* record collectors. For records alone, you get absolutely precise release dates, composers' names, original music sheet publishers, titles of original Broadway shows, etc. Of great help (to some of us anyway) is *when* certain selections were deleted or changed. To cite an example, the Edison 2-minute record #1027 (1898), *Girl Wanted* was originally done by Dan W. Quinn. I have what must be a 1902 molded remake by S. H. Dudley, with piano accompaniment — a very tinny sounding one to be sure — but I did not know until Vol. VI (1908) of EPM that the title had been remastered yet again, this time by Billy Murray, with orchestra accompaniment.

I think it would be a good idea to outline just a few of the things I learned from going through these elegant books. I referred to deleted records above, and the first list of such titles appeared in the March 1904 issue, where 227 titles got the axe. The reason given was an ominous foretaste of one of the factors that helped drive cylinders out of public favor: the active catalog was becoming so large and unwieldy that jobbers and dealers were finding it difficult to carry large stocks (after all, most of a cylinder is

empty space). As a result, they pleaded for a reduction that would keep the active catalog under 2000 titles. The company took the action under some protest, claiming that many of the deleted items were still selling fairly well. Some of these deleted titles would have had to be dropped or remade, since the original molds had deteriorated beyond use; others were simply slow sellers. Much soul searching seems to have been involved. At least this explains the relative rarity of some of the titles.

The Edison organization was adamantly opposed to any form of discounting, insisting on strict price maintenance (as did Victor). Anyone who violated this clause in his dealer's agreement was dealt with most severely. In 1908, the agreement was modified to an exclusive-line contract - i.e., dealers could sell only Edison records and phonographs, although an exception was made for the sale of used machines of other makes taken in trade.

The Edison organization was successful for a while in getting an injunction against the Lambert Company, claiming that Lambert's celluloid cylinders infringed Edison's 1888 patent on the tapered bore. Lambert cylinders of course only gripped the mandrel at each end, which formed the basis of Lambert's defense. However, there was no follow-up on the outcome of this interesting case. We now know that technically speaking Lambert won, since he convinced the court that his cylinders did not infringe and he did drop the little guide-blocks inside the cylinder at the title end. The tapered-bore patent expired in 1905 with the result that Lambert made his last few cylinders with a plaster tapered core. But even though Lambert triumphed in the courts, I'll bet the litigation must have cost him more than money - after all, he went out of business not long after, perhaps forced to sell his patents to the Indestructible Record Co. of Albany, NY in 1906. At any rate, Edison was himself unable (from a patent point-of-view) to manufacture unbreakable cylinders, and he was not commercially able to do so until 1912 when he purchased the British Philpot patents and introduced his highly successful Blue Amberols (also with a plaster core).

In most cases, the Edison Company (called National Phonograph until 1911) publicized any changes in record or machine production. One can follow the company's interest in repeating attachments for home use over the years. Also, it was in 1904 when they

suddenly switched to bevelled-end cylinders with whitened titles and a new felt-lined container. It struck me as peculiar that nothing was officially said about the discontinuance of *announced* titles and artists at the beginning of the record. This took place around the end of 1908. However, two letters from dealers were reproduced in the February 1909 issue: both greatly welcomed the change, one stopped only just short of saying "it's high time!".

I had thought the Special records in blue boxes (A-K) were always a part of the conversion (2-4 min.) attachment kits offered to owners of earlier machines. Not so -- this set of records was not offered until April 1910, well over a year later. I should have thought of that since none of the special records are announced. Arising from that, does anyone know the highest announced number of either the standard 2-minute series or the wax Amberols? The highest announced Amberol I know of is No. 54: *A Few Short Stories* by Marshall P. Wilder. If the companion record, *Stories About the Baby*, (No. 57) was made at the same session, as seems likely, it too must be announced. And of course, there are some Blue Amberols made from Amberol masters which still preserved the announcement. Has anyone looked into this with precision?

The second series of special records, in orange boxes - the D-prefixed series from 1 through 24 - was introduced in July of 1910. The lack of further issues in this series suggests that the idea of recruiting Edison owners as salesmen was not exactly a howling success.

I had always thought that combination attachments were available for all the older machines as soon as the new concept was introduced in the Fall of 1908. I found, however, that one model - the Gem - could not be converted by the user until July of 1910 (the factory had one available, the D, in 1909). I infer that the compact design of the Gem, along with its smaller motor, made the design unusually difficult. However, the final design of the add-on was quite clever, even if rarely found today.

The company made quite a fuss over the release in late April 1910 of Ernest Shackleton's own telling of his race to the South Pole (No. 473) and a separate flyer was issued. These hard-to-find Amberol cylinders were sent to the jobbers on April 20th with directions that they be put on sale as soon as received. (Where are they now?) A major

point made was that Shackleton agreed not to recount his exploit (he almost got to the Pole) on "any other Talking Machine Records." There must have been some sulphurous mutterings about "perfidious Albion" at West Orange when Shackleton's Victor disc came out not much later!

So there you have some of the highlights from the series that interested me the most — everyone has his favorites — and there are enough for the most divergent collectors, ranging from dates and pictures of new model introductions, phonograph motor design changes, advertising gimmickry, store display layouts, biographical data on artists, legal reports on patent disputes, the impact of show business on the phonograph (Sophie Tucker and Sarah Bernhardt both made their Edison debut in 1910), and much else, all presented in the original words and pictures. Each volume contains 12 issues as they then appeared. Obviously I recommend the acquisition of the entire set if at all possible. The printing and binding (all uniformly excellent) were done for the first seven volumes in Kentucky; new volumes, including VIII out now, are being printed by the same company that did Ron Dethlefsen's handsome Blue Amberol opus. These are clearly books to be handled as well as revered. The number of pages ranges from 180 to 312, in the original page numbering sequence. The advantage is that you don't have to wait for each issue a month at a time; you can get them by the year, or all at once.

The "current" volume (VIII - 1910) is now available directly from Wendell Moore or through the official distributor, APM for only \$18.95 ppd. The earlier volumes are priced as follows: I through V, \$13.95 ea. ppd. Vol. VI & VII, \$14.95 ea. ppd. Get your order in while these gems are still available — after all, only two complete sets turned up in the last 75 years. Otherwise, you'll be in the position of the bibliophile who just found the concluding volume of a Victorian-era three-volume novel, and can't find the other two parts: dissatisfied and frustrated at what you've missed. And don't forget there are more to come, up through 1916.

It goes without saying that in the end *collectors* make these books possible, and with your support, others will appear in this series and elsewhere. Volume IX (1911) is now in production and readers will be kept informed through APM. Ron Dethlefsen, who is now acting as Wendell's assistant, is acquiring additional material to be included from the Amberol era. □

## From the Golden Age: *The Met's 100th*

Joe Klee

What with the media blitz coverage the event has received, it would be hard to imagine that anyone who watches television or reads newspapers would be unaware that October 22, 1983 marked the 100th anniversary of the Metropolitan Opera. Although the invention of the phonograph pre-dated the Met's opening night by five years, there are no recorded reminders of that historic performance of Gounod's *Faust*. Despite the fact that Christine Nilsson, the Marguerite of that evening, did not retire until 1891 and Italo Campanini, who sang the title role, sang until 1894, if either of these artists ever sang into the recording horn, neither the results nor any evidence of their existence has come to my attention.

Between 1901 and 1903, Lionel Mapleson, librarian of the Metropolitan, made on-stage (over-stage?) recordings of many of the singers with a machine supplied to him by Thomas Edison. When these cylinders are transcribed to LP by Tom Owen (of Owl I fame) and released by the Metropolitan in conjunction with the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at Lincoln Center, we may finally have a chance to hear something of the glory of Jean de Reszke. Hopefully, this will happen some time during the centennial year, but even if the release is delayed, it will be worth the wait. Even those singers whom commercial recording companies managed to catch in the studios may well be a revelation as we hear them recorded live in the opera house, minus the necessities of time and budget which obliged record companies to speed up or abbreviate selections and diminish the size of the orchestra.

Another early non-commercial attempt at recording great singers, both Met and non-Met, was made in 1892 by J. Mount Bleyer, M.D., Surgeon at the New York Throat Infirmary. (see APM, Vol. IV, no. 8). Recorded primarily for the study of the mechanics of the throat and related diseases, these cylinders included such artists as tenor Andreas Dippel, Helen Mora, Bertha Ricci, Emile Steger, and Nicolini.

Another early pioneer in operatic recording was Lieut. G. Bettini whose colorful career in the industry is important enough to rate a column by itself. Indeed, one has been planned for the future. By the way, another Bettini cylinder (ca. 1899) recently surfaced in Maryland, this one by de Bassini, "O vin discaccia".

Officially, commercial operatic recording dates from 1896 when Emile Berliner (who had pioneered in disc recording as opposed to the cylinder) and Fred Gaisberg, acting as recording director and accompanist, recorded Fer-

(Continued next page)

ruccio Giannini singing two arias from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, (and others from *Il Trovatore*, *Martha*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and *Aida*). Although Giannini never made it to the Met roster, his daughter Dusolina debuted there in 1936 as *Aida*.

In 1902, the Victor Talking Machine Company began importing the European-made G&T celebrity recordings and putting them on their famous Red Seal label. This meant recordings by Maurice Renaud, Antonio Scotti, and Enrico Caruso.

By 1903, Columbia had seen the writing on the wall and countered with a series of domestically-made Grand Opera records, including such artists as Marcella Sembrich, Antonio Scotti, Suzanne Adams, Edouard De Reszke and Ernestine Schumann-Heink. The Columbia offerings were so badly recorded and merchandised that they did not really represent a threat to Victor, and later in 1903, Victor was making operatic recordings in America as well with Zélie de Lussan as their chief attraction. If there was any battle for supremacy in the field of operatic recording, it was settled on February 1st, 1904, when Caruso made his first American recordings and to the Victor belonged the spoils. (*For earlier Caruso's, see APM, Vol. V, no. 4.*)

Edison formally entered the operatic field in 1906 with the blue-inked titles of the 2-minute wax cylinders, but despite artists such as Bessie Abbott, Andreas Dippel, Antonio Scotti, and Anton von Rooy, as well as many others on 4-minute wax, Blue and Purple Amberols, and finally Diamond Discs, the Edison company failed to make much of a dent in Victor's stable.

In considering official Metropolitan Opera Recordings, one need only turn to David Hamilton's article "For the Record", in the October 1983 issue of *Opera News*. Hamilton feels that it is probable that members of the Metropolitan Orchestra were used to accompany operatic artists when they made Victor Red Seal records in New York, even though their actual title is not so listed on the recordings. Hamilton mentions recordings of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra directed by Nathan Franko appearing as early as a 1902 catalog from Leeds & Catlin Co., NY. I have two Caruso recordings in my collection with label credit given to the Metropolitan Opera Chorus, but with no mention of the orchestra. These are Victor 89030, the "Miserere" from Verdi's *Trovatore*, sung by Caruso, Alda, and the Chorus, and Victor 88581, on which Caruso and the chorus perform the 3rd act aria from *Samson*. I am curious to know from those who have later issues of these recordings if at any point the *orchestra* was identified as being that of the Metropolitan. Yet, the Met's fame rests not on their orchestra or chorus, but on such stars as Caruso and Sembrich, and by 1905, Victor had them both.

It was almost the era of long-playing records

(1947) before a complete opera recording of a Met production was issued. This was Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel*, sung by a Metropolitan Opera cast, including Risé Stevens and Nadine Connor with Thelma Votipka doing double duty as the Witch and the Sandman. The Met Chorus and Orchestra were under the direction of Max Rudolf, a conductor of great ability in a wide repertoire who has never been sufficiently recognized and praised by the critical establishment. Since that time, Met recordings have appeared on a number of labels, some as familiar as Victor, Columbia, Deutsche Grammophon... some as obscure as a cooperative label jointly sponsored by the Metropolitan Opera and the Book-of-the-Month Club!

One of the finest among the centennial souvenirs being offered for sale this year is *The Golden Age of Opera* by M.O. archivist Robert Tuggle (published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, price \$35.00). The book includes 180 duotone photographs, most by Herman Mishkin who was official Metropolitan photographer from 1910 until 1932 and photographer for Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House for four seasons prior to his going with the Met. Mishkin was, in fact, one of only three employees who were signed by the Metropolitan at the close of the Metropolitan/Manhattan war which in effect banished Hammerstein from producing opera in New York City for a specified period of time. The other two were publicist William Guard and baritone Charles Glibert who died before the opening of the 1910-1911 season which would have marked his Met debut. The book includes a number of familiar photographs, but how could such a book have excluded Mishkin's portraits of Caruso, either as Canio or as Eléazar in Halevy's *La Juive*. Most of the illustrations are of rarer vintage. They include Caruso's sketch of Mishkin photographing a subject (turn about IS fair play) and the publisher states that most have not been published in over fifty years. The names are magic... Bonci, Gerville-Réache, Garden, Destinn, Slezak, Caruso, Ponselle, Ruffo, Chaliapin and so on down to such latter day saints as Pinza and Pons. The photographs are further illuminated by brief biographies and selected writings of such contemporary critics as W.J. Henderson, Richard Aldrich and Pitts Sanborn.

The only point about which I would care to quibble with Mr. Tuggle is the arbitrary selection of 1906-1932 as the "Golden Age." The fact that Mishkin began his career as photographer to the opera stars in 1906 and finished it in 1932 does not eliminate years on either side of that time span from being "Golden". Many of the singers in this book trace their careers back to well before 1906 (Sembrich is a good example since she was in the Met's inaugural 1883-1884 season) ...and I still find gold occasionally at the Met even today. All quibbling aside, this is a magnificent book, well worth it for anyone with an interest in the "Golden Age of Opera",

whenever one feels that was.

The golden age seems a bit easier to define when one is talking about recordings of opera singers. The commonly accepted practice is to consider acoustic recordings golden and electrical ones less so. I can't really go along with that. Every age has had its golden singers and every age has had its tin soldiers. Much as I treasure my shellac Carusos I also treasure my vinyl Richard Tuckers... maybe not as much but treasure is treasure regardless of degree. RCA (they used to be Victor but now they're RCA) solves their problems more ingeniously than most of us do. They have issued a red seal RCA LP of *Opening Nights At the New Met*, digitally remastered analog recordings by Domingo, Caballe, Price, Bergonzi, Milnes etc. They have also re-issued their *Opening Nights At the Met* (the old Met, that is) on their Gold Seal (there's that word again) reissue label. And that includes Caruso, Ponselle, Ruffo, Sayao, Pons, Pinza and many more.

I'm not all that overwhelmed by digital remastering of recordings originally made by the analog process. It's not as abominable as electronically rechannelled stereo, but I'm not thrilled with the results. On the other hand I am thrilled with some of the singing on *Opening Nights At the New Met* RCA ARL1-4856. Leontyne Price's singing of "Give Me My Robe" from Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* is enough to arouse my interest in a work that was almost universally condemned when it first appeared at the New Met's first opening night in 1966. Also the conducting of the late Thomas Schippers on this selection and on the *Ernani* excerpts is sufficient cause to mourn his loss anew. The *Ernani* selection features the tenor voice of Carlo Bergonzi - a singer still living but gone from the Met at this point. His worth is well documented here and elsewhere. Placido Domingo, the superstar of the issue since Pavarotti and Carreras are contractually elsewhere, appears in a number of his most famous roles. He portrays Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Manrico in *Trovatore* and the title roles in *Don Carlo* and *Otello*. Yes, he has a fine voice, or at least did at the time of these recordings. I refuse, however, to get into the big Domingo, Pavarotti, Carreras brouhaha. When you compare them with some of the giants of bygone days, it becomes more of much ado about nothing. Frankly of the tenors on this record, and probably the singers too, although I am very fond of Mme Price, I prefer Bergonzi.

*Opening Nights At the Met* RCA AGM3-4805 is a collection of old friends. Listing them alphabetically on the front cover they go from Erna Berger to Leonard Warren. Chronologically they go from the days of Louise Homer (1904) to Roberta Peters, Cesare Valletti and Robert Merrill (1958). Quality wise? Well, here's where the arguments start. For my taste they go from the very highest to the satisfactory. Certainly none are incompetent though some

are miscast in their roles. In rarity they go from the commonplace ... (is there really anyone who doesn't have Caruso's record of the *Juive* aria in some way, shape or form by this point) to the relatively unknown (this was my first encounter with the splendid Act 3 ensemble from Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* which paired some big names like Lawrence Tibbett, Giovanni Martinelli, Rose Bampton and her husband Wilfred Pelletier with the young unknown but already magnificent, Leonard Warren. It also includes the entire Temple Scene from *Aida* in the 1927 recording with Enzo Pinza, Giovanni Martinelli, Grace Anthony and the Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra directed by Giulio Setti. On the other reissues I have of this item, only the second half is on the LP. Now I have it all. Despite the fact that the album cover states mono — and all record labels state stereo — the selections which were recorded monophonically are left alone and not electronically rechannelled. Those which were recorded in stereo appear in stereo ... Pinza's *Boris* and most of side six. The liner notes by Francis Robinson are intelligent, interesting and informative as was just about everything I've ever come across that Robinson wrote or said.

I don't know whether RCA planned it this way but they have given us an excellent opportunity to contrast LP recording of opera with 78 recording of opera. The set from the new house includes an excerpt from Act 1 of *Traviata* beginning "Follie! Follie!" and going into "Sempre libera." The recording with Montserrat Caballe - soprano and Carlo Bergonzi - tenor with Georges Pretre and the RCA Italiana Opera Orchestra runs for 4 minutes and 48 seconds and comes from a complete *Traviata* recorded by RCA in 1967. On side 3 of the old Met reissues, we find a recording by soprano Lucrezia Bori of an item listed as "Verdi *La Traviata* Act 1: FOLLIE! FOLLIE!; SEMPRE LIBERA" which lasts only 2:59. It is an expurgated version of the aria cut down to fit on a 78 RPM record. Even at that, poor Bori has to rush to get it all in. Among the things omitted are the lines sung by the tenor. It was the best that Victor could do in 1928. Now with the LP recordings they can get the whole aria ... tenor and all ... recorded in glorious stereo ... reprocessed digitally ... and yet all these advantages aren't able to give Madame Caballe the glory that was Lucrezia Bori ... in my opinion anyway. Yes I AM glad that we have LP recordings so arias don't have to be cut down or sped up to record size and I AM glad that we have stereo and digital so we can hear every note of the full orchestra, chorus and soloists - especially if the recording is well done and we get it in proper perspective. Yes I DO wish that we could have had today's technocracy before we lost the greatest voices. But then, if wishes were horses... I'll just be glad I have both of these albums. I enjoy them both ... for different reasons. □

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(VII-9)

Don't forget the next **Tri-State Music Collectibles Show** on **Nov. 11, 1984** at the **Meadowlands Hilton, Secaucus, NJ**, Sun. from **11 am to 5 pm**. This is *the* show to buy & sell, and meet other collectors! For more details, call **Bob Barlow at (201) 994-0294**.

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(VII-8)

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Wanted: Small Talk-o-phone disc machine, early model with dovetail cabinet corners, slip-in support-arm, etc. Any reasonable price paid, or excellent trade. Steven Hobbs, 1116 W. Morgan, Kokomo, IN 46901. (VII-9)

Want any phono material relating to A. Theo E. Wangemann, recording engineer for Edison in the 1890's. Equipment, documents, photos, etc. Howard Hazelnorn, 595 Grenville, Teaneck, NJ 07666. (VII-8)

## “Highlights” of E.P.M. Vol. VIII, 1910

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>No. 1 January.</b>   | Record list—March<br>Photo of Marie Dressler<br>Columbia 2nd—Victor 3rd behind Edison<br>1A still in short supply<br>Model L reproducer first on Amberola 1A |
| <b>No. 2 February.</b>  | Record list—April<br>Mr. Edison winters in Florida<br>Sara Bernhardt records coming  |
| <b>No. 3 March.</b>     | Record list—May<br>A false rumor nailed<br>“Special Hit” records introduced<br>Sophie Tucker, new talent   |
| <b>No. 4 April.</b>     | Record list—June<br>Model L replaced by Model M<br>Combination attachment sale, A - K records<br>Amberola testimonials                                       |
| <b>No. 5 May.</b>       | Record list—July<br>A South Pole record<br>“Casey Jones” a predicted hit<br>Photo of Wanamaker’s showroom<br>A trip to South America                         |
| <b>No. 6 June.</b>      | Record list—August<br>About Triumph attachments<br>New Grand Opera talent—Jörn and Polese  |
| <b>No. 7 July.</b>      | Record list—September<br>Premium Records D-1 — D-24<br>Phonograph description chart<br>Parts prices<br>New York City photo—Edison sign                       |
| <b>No. 8 August.</b>    | Record list—October<br>Wooden horn introduced<br>Model M reproducer replaces the Model L<br>Music Master Horn—an Edison product                              |
| <b>No. 9 September.</b> | Record list—November<br>Amberola in wild mining country<br>New Model O reproducer on Triumphs and Idelias<br>Model C reproducer replaces Model A             |
| <b>No. 10 October.</b>  | Record list—December<br>Pictures of four artists<br>Model O reproducer for Balmoral and Alva Phonographs   |
| <b>No. 11 November.</b> | Record list—January<br>Artist photos<br>Edison stock list<br>Change in Idelia Phonograph finish to maroon enamel<br>Music Master Horn a big hit              |
| <b>No. 12 December.</b> | Record list—February<br>First two color E.P.M.<br>Recording horns discontinued<br>New Amberola cabinet featured  |

Volume VIII, (1910), available for \$18.95 ppd. from:  
Wendell Moore, RR 2, Box 474H, Sedona, AZ 86336.

### HELP: I NEED PARTS!

Need complete tone modulator for an Edison Diamond Disc phonograph. Thanks. Chuck Cross, 945 Closse Way, Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1K 4A6. Or (613) 744-2845. (VII-8)

Would like to hear from someone who has had success in making, recording and playing records for the 1890 Edison Talking Doll. Allen D. Sheneman, 1314 N. Lowell St., Santa Ana, CA 92706.

Need empty 5" Concert cylinder box only. Also need a Type A Edison Gem, 2nd series. Paul Goldberg, Chalet Apts A-8, Smyrna, TN 37167. Or (615) 254-5925. (VII-8)

Need schematic or plans for Bing Crosby Junior Jukebox, made of tin & plastic. Please help. Henry Arukelian, P. O. Box 667, So. Orange, NJ 07079. (VII-8)

Need some parts, like knurled clamp screw for Victor IV, gold cabinet knobs for Victor XVI, gear cover for Edison Fireside, etc. Have list available. Steve Vella, 77-20 78th St., Glendale, NY 11385.

Model K reproducer for Edison cylinder player. Send price & cond. to Steve Pargeter, 5 Palm Dr., Greenland, NH 03840.

Complete cabinet for Harmony No. 9 by Columbia Phono Co. and/or info on Polyphone for Edison cylinder phonographs. Michael Mullis, 206 Edgeport Dr., Lancaster, SC 29720.

Want Victor 10 reproducer. Early Victor machine catalogs. Small Victor I tone-arm. Victor B nameplate. Ken Blazier, 2937 Elda St., Duarte, CA 91010. (VII-8)

*Time to Renew!*

### HELP: I NEED PARTS!

Large Victor oak horn for Victor IV or V. Also looking for large brass-bell horn for a Victor II or III - must have a 22"-23" bell size. Also want Victor III phono. Bob Nowak, 3233 N. Central Pk., Chicago, IL 60618. Or (312) 539-8432. (VII-9)

Want top-deck (oak) for early cylinder cabinet (See **APM**, Vol. II, no. 9 front cover). Thanks. Allen Koenigsberg, 502 E. 17 St., Brooklyn, NY 11226.

Wanted: Original oxidized "H" reproducer and morning glory crane for Edison Idelia. Also Berliner reproducer and horizontal wooden tone-arm. I will buy junk machines for parts. Charlie Stewart, 900 Grandview Ave., Reno, NV 89503. Or (702) 747-1439 days (10am best). (VII-10)

Need crank approx. 15-17" long for Brunswick Model 'S'. Also Edison cylinder recording head or device. Glenn Taranto, 500 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11231. Or (212) 643-1507.

Wanted: Wooden horns for Victor, Edison or "off-brands". Also would like to purchase cylinder cabinets, any condition. Mike Patella, 14790 SW 14 Str., Davie, FL 33325. Or (305) 473-8641. (VIII-7)

Need grilles for: Edison DD model B-19 (Chalet) and for Edison DD model B-80. Also top-front grille for Edison Amberola X. Robin Rolfs, Rt. 1, Box 215, Hortonville, WI 54944.

Looking to purchase a lamp for a round Modernola phono. Even a photo would help. Also need horn for Busy Bee Q cylinder type player. Roger Sannes, 312 - 2nd Ave. N., Grand Forks, ND 58201. Or (701) 772-0541.

### HELP: I NEED PARTS!

**Talk-o-phone Machines**, parts large horns, advertising, etc. Steven Hobbs, 1116 W. Morgan, Kokomo, IN 46901.

### RECORDS FOR SALE

Vast stock of 78's, Edisons, LP's. Make specific requests. SASE. Ralph W. Sim, 64 River-view Rd., Clifton Park, NY 12065. (VII-8)

We sell classical, vocal, opera, piano, violin, 78's and LP's, books on singers and record catalogs before 1930. For free list, write: Arthur Knight, 128 Fifth St., Providence, RI 02906. (VIII-4)

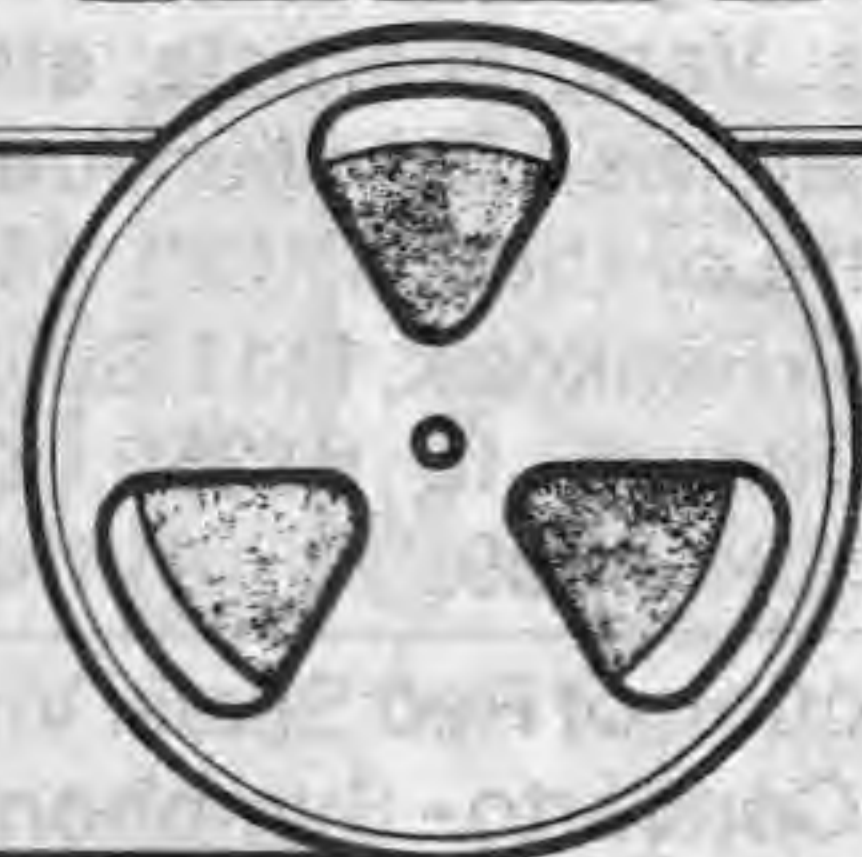
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**Auctions:** 78 rpm only, 1900-1940. Popular, Jazz, Classical. No minimums, loads of collectibles. D. Reiss, 3920 Eve Dr., Seaford, NJ 11783. (VIII-7)

We sell Classical, vocal, opera, piano, violin 78's and LPs. Books on singers and record catalogs before 1930. For free lists, write: Arthur Knight, 128 Fifth St., Providence, RI 02906. (VIII-6)

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Record collection for sale. Variety of collectors items, RCA, Columbia, Bluebird, Decca, etc. featuring Caruso, McCormack, Shaw, Goodman, etc. Send SASE for list. A. D'Angelo, 21 Graywood Rd., Pt. Washington, NY 11050. Or (212) 354-6070. (VII-8)

**World's finest collection.** Vocal and instrumental 78 records, LP books on music, programmes, record catalogs, autographed photographs. Catalogs available at request. **Colon Records, S.R.L.**, 33 Orientales 955/57, 1236 Buenos Aires, Argentina. (VII-9)

Rare records and cylinders at auction monthly. Jazz, dance bands, classical, Diamond discs, anything pre-1935. Write or call. (See our display ad!) **Vertigo Hill Records**, 581 Arch St., New Britain, CT 06051. Or (203) 225-0895.

### RECORDS FOR SALE

Recruiting records from the 1950's. Various artists, also commercials & Salvation Army Theatre of the Air, 12", 15". Eugene Renkosik, 1111 Guion St., Ottawa, IL 61350. Or (815) 434-6689. (VII-9)

Collection of Red Seals: Victors - Concerto - Symphony, "Musical Masterpiece Series" Beethoven, Schubert, Tchaikovsky. Robert Baker, P.O. Box 914, Klamath Falls, OR 97601. (VIII-1)

Nostalgia and other LP's (60's to 80's) for sale. Send SASE to Stephen Plotkin, 20 Erie Ave., Emerson, NJ 07630. (VII-8)

Cylinder records for sale: 2- & 4-minute. Send 2 stamps for priced lists. Cylinders bought, sold, traded. Ron Kramer, 131 N. Shore Dr., Syracuse, IN 46567. (VII-8)

I have an old Fibber McGee and Molly Christmas Album. Can anyone tell me how much it is worth? M. Boswell, 1759 Lizzie Lane, Mableton, GA 30059.

### RECORDS WANTED

Presidential or other famous speech records (cylinder) ca. 1900-1910. Dick Ellis, 458 Bancroft St., Santa Clara, CA 95051.

Columbia 4562, *Loo-Loo (Hit the Deck)*, Tresmand, London, 1927. Ralph Reithner, 2952 Magliocco Dr., #14, San Jose, CA 95128, USA (VIII-2)

U.S. Everlasting and Lakeside cylinders. Any title, any quantity. Also Blue Amberols over #4500. Ron Kramer, 131 North Shore Dr., Syracuse, IN 46567. (VII-8)

Edison DD's: *Zeb Turney's Gal* by Dalhart, *You'll Do It Someday*; Victor Orthophonic *Mississippi Mud* by Whiteman. Steve Vella, 77-20 78th St., Glendale, NY 11385.

### RECORDS WANTED

Want cylinders, 78's or Edison DD's containing **Xylophone**, bells, or marimba bands, especially those by **George Hamilton Green**. David Harvey, 392 Western Ave., Gloucester, MA 01930. (VIII-1)

Want to buy military and concert band records (Sousa, Pryor, Prince, etc.), brass, woodwind, percussion solos, duets, trios, etc. All labels, all speeds. Send your lists. State condition and price. Frederick P. Williams, 8313 Shawnee St., Philadelphia, PA 19118. (VIII-2)

Tango records of 78rpm wanted by collector. Art Suzuki, 672 Church St., Oradell, NJ 07649. (VII-9)

Want Bell 1048, *Susan Slept Here/Hold My Hand*, RKO, 1954; Decca F-7574, *I Can't Love You Anymore*, Bebe Daniels. Ralph Reithner, 2952 Magliocco Dr., #14, San Jose, CA 95128. (VIII-2)

Want Ethel Merman 78's, excluding *Annie* and *Call Me Madam*. S. Koenig, 1298 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712. (VII-9)

Records in excellent condition of French and Belgian opera singers: Zonophone, Odeon, G&T's. APGA. Also, early copies *The Record Collector Magazine*. Lewis M. Hall, 115 Central Park West, New York, NY 10023.

1924 Christmas Greeting Edison Record. Also Diamond Discs, 51000 & 52000 series. Write: Dwight Anklam, 80 Lenore Dr., Meriden, CT 06450

Want to buy Columbia *Collision March* and Musetta's Waltz, any label. Norris Dullum, 1104 - 14th Ave. N., Wahpeton, ND 58075.

Wanted: Busy Bee cylinders. Liz Grubb, 1412 W. Walnut Ave., Lompoc, CA 93436. Or (805) 736-8118.

# EDISON



**BLUE AMBEROL RECORDINGS 1915...'29**

Edison Blue Amberol Recordings, Volume II is now available from Allen Koenigsberg, 502 East 17th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226, or from Ron Dethlefson, 3605 Christmas Tree Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

This 512 page book is hardbound, printed on heavy glossy paper for a permanent addition to your library. There are over 2,000 references to Blue Amberol cylinders from original supplements and dealer lists. Many of these are in their original colors. The editor has included over 200 artists photos, some never before published, plus photos of Amberola machines, recording studios, and chronologies of the Blue Amberols of the period, including popular, operatic and foreign recordings.

An important feature of the book is a 30-page chapter by Jim Walsh on Blue Amberol artists, with illustrations and autographs from the original Edison files at the Henry Ford Museum. And there are dozens of Blue Amberol record slips, Diamond Disc liner notes, and information on the manufacture of the Blue Amberol Cylinders.

**The edition is limited to 500 copies, each numbered and autographed by compiler/editor Ron Dethlefson. Copies are \$47.50, including postage and handling. (Volume I, 1912-1914 is available only if purchased with Volume II. Price is \$76.50 per two volume set.)**



## RECORDS WANTED

Edison Diamond Discs: 52510 *Toymakers Dream*; 52448 *Doin' the Raccoon*. Blue Amberol 4050 *Oh, Joe (Please Don't Go)*. Rolfe #5665 BA. American issue black Lamberts. Joe Pengelly, 36, Thorn Park, Mannamead, Plymouth, England.

Want 78 rpm records of Spanish language singers. Jose Fernandez, Box 2362, Hato Rey, Puerto Rico 00919.

Active collector of early brass solists wishes to buy/obtain tape copy of Edison record 8191, A. Liberati, "4 1/2 Octave Schottische". Will exchange tapes. Ron Stokes, 8305 Halprin Dr., Norfolk, VA 23518.

Interested in buying Berliners & other 7" discs. Also Edison Long-plays, Pathe, Lambert and Concert-size cylinders, any artists. Mark Downing, 19563 E. 1st Place, Tulsa, OK 74108.

Carlos Gardel and Glenn Miller on 78 rpm records. Clara Koser, 2681 W. 2nd St., Brooklyn, NY 11223.

(VIII-2)

## PRINTED ITEMS FOR SALE

**Quality Phonograph Reprints** Columbia Cylinder Record Catalog, 1900, 40 pp., \$3.50; National (Berliner) Gramophone Record Catalog, ca. 1898, 32 pp., \$4.00; Zonophone Record Catalog, ca. 1903, 24 pp., \$3.00; Columbia Graphophone Catalog (machines), ca. 1900, 18 pp., \$3.50; Victor Repair Parts Catalog, 1907, 28 pp., \$5.50; Okeh Record Catalog, ca. 1928, 32 pp., \$4.00. Special if all ordered at same time, \$20.00. US post, add \$1., foreign post, add 1.50. **The Old Record Shop**, 2405 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Or (301) 585-7070.

## PRINTED ITEMS FOR SALE

New books available from Allen Koenigsberg: **The American Record Label Book**, by Brian Rust, 336 pages, hardcovers, illustrated, \$39.95; **Jukebox: the Golden Age**, full color, 110 pages, only \$9.95 ppd. **The Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings, Vol. I (1900-1903)**, 462 pp., \$49.95 ppd. **The Story of Nipper** by Len Petts, (Revised & enlarged 2nd ed.), \$6.95. Write: Allen Koenigsberg, 502 E. 17th St., Brooklyn, NY 11226.

Re-issue of 1905 Columbia laterals, #1-1910, listed numerically, Jefferson, Emma Carus, European, incl. Russian Opera, Grand Opera series, 1902; 14" discs, first double series. 81 pp., only \$6.95, ppd. A. E. Knight, 128 Fifth, Providence, RI 02906.

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(TF)

## PRINTED ITEMS FOR SALE

Send for your Catalog of **Phonograph, Jukebox, and Player Piano Publications** to: **AMR**, P. O. Box 3194, Seattle, WA 98114. (VII-8)

## PRINTED ITEMS WANTED

Old phonograph and record catalogs bought, sold & traded. Please write to **Tim Brooks**, 84-22M 264th St., Floral Park, NY 11001.

## ITEMS FOR TRADE

Edison disc table model, Amberola 30, early 1930's Ediphone equipment, Columbia 20th Century, 1947 Olympia TV. Trade or sell. K.E. Wissman, 1935 Dorothea, Berkley, MI 48072.

## MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

Ten 13-note Orguette strips, \$100. Berliner records, brown wax, Uncle Josh, etc. Send SASE for free list. Arthur Wohl, 101 Clark St., #3K, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Or (834-8993). (VII-8)

34 wood roller organ cobs, \$7.50 ea., all \$200. 8 Celestina Mandolina paper rolls, \$15. ea. Stamp please. M. Varisco, 22000 Boston Rd., Strongsville, OH 44136. Or (216) 238-7644.

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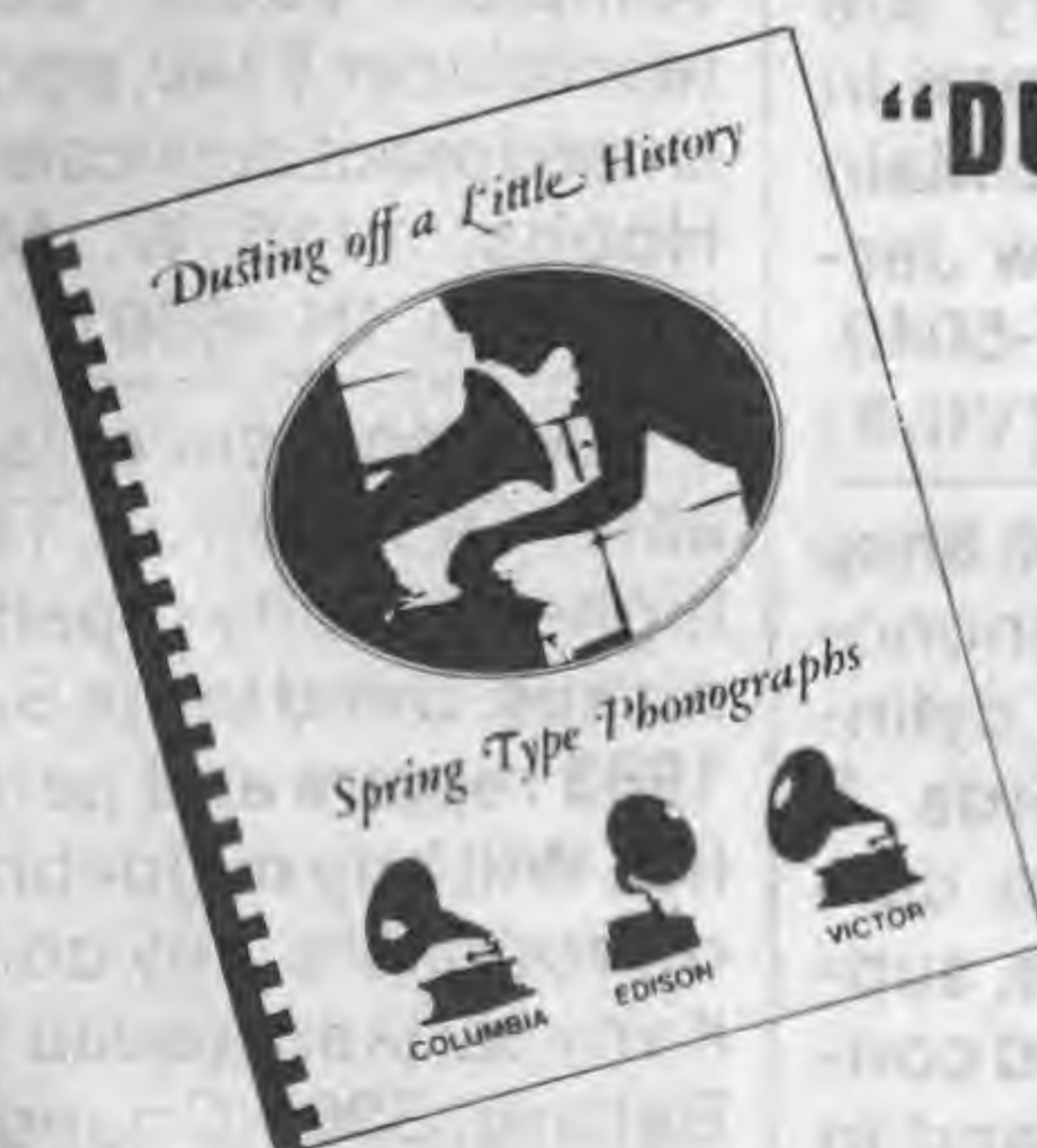
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(VII-9)

**Nipper Decal** for Victor wood horns. Nice. \$3.25 postpaid. Ken Blazier, 2937 Elda St., Duarte, CA 91010. (VII-10)

Is your Edison Opera complete? Yes? Are you sure? Well, maybe, but if your Amberola 1A, 1B, 111, Opera or School does not have the little plugs in the oil holes, it **should** have. The 1A has 3 and the rest have 5. I have them for quick delivery at 75¢ each ppd. Solid brass. Wendell Moore, RR2, Box 474H, Sedona, AZ 86336. Or 602-282-3419. (VII-8)

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Want to buy old cameras and daguerreotypes, stereo views, etc. Also interested in buying and selling military images. Send \$2 for my latest 1983 illustrated sales list. Mark Koenigsberg, 700 Boulevard East, #7D, Weehawken, NJ 07087. Or (201) 863-0868.

Gramophone needle tins wanted, particularly American Columbias. Many British & foreign for sale at \$2, \$3. incl. HMV, Songsters, Columbia. Details R. Lambert, 24 Church Way, Weston Favell, Northampton NN3 3BT, England. (VIII-6)

Old radio magazines, radio service data and service manuals, catalogs. Krantz, 100 Osage Ave., Somerdale, NJ 08083.

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I will buy or trade for Edison Home Kinetoscope films and projectors, original literature, parts and related materials. Reid Welch, 8034 West 21 Court, Hialeah, FL 33016. Or (305) 821-2702. (VII-10)

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If your reproducer is repairable, I'll repair it. The very highest quality repairs on all makes. Send large SASE for 1983 repairs and parts price list. Will buy major brands of reproducers, any condition, if any parts are useable. Gene Ballard, 5281 Country Club Drive, Paradise, CA 95969. (VII-9)

Experienced machinist with home shop will repair any reproducer; machines professionally cleaned and repaired. Will buy any reproducer parts. **Randle Pomeroy**, 54 - 12th St., Providence, RI 02906. Or 401-272-5560 after 6 pm. (VII-8)